

READING SAMARITANS

England & Wales · Charity number 1170632

Details

Status Registered

Legal form CIO

Registered 2016-12-08

Register [View on the Charity Commission register](#)

Contact

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Reading
Berkshire
RG1 3NB

Phone 01189660903

Email reading@samaritans.org

Website www.samaritans.org/branches/reading-samaritans

Activities

Objects: TO ENABLE PERSONS IN READING AND THE SURROUNDING AREA AS WELL AS ELSEWHERE WHO ARE EXPERIENCING FEELINGS OF DISTRESS OR DESPAIR, INCLUDING THOSE WHO MAY BE AT RISK OF SUICIDE, TO RECEIVE CONFIDENTIAL EMOTIONAL SUPPORT AT ANY TIME OF THE DAY OR NIGHT IN ORDER TO IMPROVE THEIR EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND TO REDUCE THE INCIDENCE OF SUICIDE; TO PROMOTE A BETTER UNDERSTANDING IN SOCIETY OF SUICIDE, SUICIDAL BEHAVIOUR AND THE VALUE OF EXPRESSING FEELINGS WHICH MAY OTHERWISE LEAD TO SUICIDE OR IMPAIRED EMOTIONAL HEALTH; AND TO COLLABORATE WITH AND SUPPORT SAMARITANS CENTRAL CHARITY AND ITS AFFILIATED BRANCHES IN FULFILLING THESE OBJECTS.

Activities: Provides confidential emotional support, by telephone, text message, email or face to face, to those in distress or at risk of suicide.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information
- **What:** Education/training, The Advancement Of Health Or Saving Of Lives
- **Who:** The General Public/mankind

Geography

- Reading

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£36,440	£38,598	-	-
2024-03-31	£60,309	£52,345	-	-
2023-03-31	£37,041	£43,996	-	-
2022-03-31	£59,417	£45,902	-	-
2021-03-31	£31,893	£33,110	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Atul Khetarpal		2024-10-10
Darren Jones		2019-11-07
Emma Louise Fraser		2025-10-09
Helen Elizabeth Blanchard		2021-08-31
Hetal Patel		2021-11-11
Justin John Henniker Bedingfeld		2021-02-08
Sarah Jane Bowsher		2022-11-10
Sophie Elisabeth McBean		2022-10-25
Stephen Scott		2025-04-18
Tracey Nicola Chessher		2025-10-09
William Russell Dixon		2025-10-09

Linked charities

- READING SAMARITANS (1170632-1)

Accounts

READING SAMARITANS
TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT
AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1 APRIL 2024 TO 31 MARCH 2025

Charity Registration Number: 1170632

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INTRODUCTION

Reading Samaritans is a charity based in Reading serving both the local area and wider community. It is a recognised branch of the national Samaritans Charity and, as one of around 200 branches, provides emotional support across the country.

The Reading Samaritans' trustees present their annual report and financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2025.

SAMARITANS VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

Samaritans' vision is that fewer people die by suicide. We work to achieve this vision by making it our mission to alleviate emotional distress and reduce the incidence of suicidal feelings and suicidal behaviour.

We are committed to the following values:

- Listening;
- Confidentiality;
- People making their own decision;
- Being non-judgemental; and
- Human contact.

CHARITY OBJECTIVES

The objectives of Reading Samaritans are:

- I) To enable persons in Reading and the surrounding area as well as elsewhere who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those who may be at risk of suicide, to receive confidential emotional support at any time of the day or night in order to improve their emotional health and to reduce the incidence of suicide;
- II) To promote a better understanding in society of suicide, suicidal behaviour and the value of expressing feelings which may otherwise lead to suicide or impaired emotional health; and
- III) To collaborate with and support Samaritans Central Charity and its affiliated branches in fulfilling these objectives.

CHARITY ACTIVITIES

The charity offers support to those who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those who may be at risk of suicide by being there to listen and encourage the recognition and exploration of their options. By doing so we aim to help people find ways of coping with their current feelings.

Reading Samaritans Outreach provides services to schools, higher education institutions, companies and at local events. We also work locally providing regular support in Huntercombe Prison and at local railway stations. We aim to increase awareness of our services in all sectors of the community by giving awareness talks, attending local public events and working with other organisations.

These activities are carried out by Reading Samaritans for the benefit of the local and wider community and with due regard of the guidance on public benefit published by the Charity Commission.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

While Reading Samaritans is a longstanding organisation in Reading, it was incorporated as a separate Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) on 8 December 2016.

Reading Samaritans is a recognised branch of Samaritans, with the national Samaritans Charity providing support services such as training materials and guidance. This relationship is governed by an Operating Agreement which ensures all branches adhere to the same required standards, while recognising that branches have their own leadership team and are responsible for fundraising and overall governance.

Reading Samaritans activities are wholly performed by our committed group of around 120 volunteers and we have no employees. The charity is managed by the leadership team, comprised of trustees and deputy directors. The branch Director, also a trustee, is responsible for the day to day management of the charity's activities including matters arising relating to callers and volunteers. The Director is supported in their role by a team of deputy directors who have specific roles and responsibilities.

The Trustee Board oversees the charity and have collective and ultimate responsibility for governing the charity and directing how it is managed and run. Trustees place a high priority on ensuring high standards of governance including management of risk assessment processes. Trustees are recruited from both within the charity and externally to ensure Reading Samaritans has a balanced and appropriately skilled Trustee Board. The trustee hiring process involves interviews and background checks. Following this, the Trustee Board must vote on the admission of new trustees. Members of Reading Samaritans also vote whether to re-elect each trustee at the Annual General Meeting. New trustees are provided with an initial information pack and are required to complete online training designed by the national Samaritans Charity.

Full leadership team meetings are held at least annually, with separate Trustee and deputy director meetings held on alternate months. Decisions are taken at meetings where trustees are present, with a simple majority of trustees required for decisions to be passed. Additional meetings are held when required and decisions can be made outside of these meetings if needed.

ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Support Provided

Reading Samaritans volunteers continue to provide vital support to callers. Numbers of calls are slightly higher compared to the previous year, with a continued reduction in emails reflecting changes in working practices.

- 16,726 telephone calls (15,457 in 2022/23)
- 276 emails (221 in 2022/23)

Our volunteers and Rota Secretaries continue to work hard to ensure that we cover as many shifts as possible. Reading Samaritans meets the standard set for us in our Agreement with the Samaritans Central Charity for covering hours of need shifts, when callers need us the most. Our 2023/4 performance is summarised on the table below.

Category	Time	Target	Reading Sams 2024/25	Reading Sams 2023/24
Twilight	22.00 – 02.00	20%	17.2%	21.1%
Overnight	02.00 – 06.00	10%	14.9%	12.8%
Total hours of need	22.00 – 06.00	30%	32.1%	33.9%

Key Developments

This year we celebrated our longer standing volunteers with a lunch and presentation of long service awards in August 2024. This included our longest serving volunteer who has been a Samaritans listening volunteer for over 50 years. We also held a training day in February 2025 which was open to all volunteers and which provided 'top up' training on a range of topics selected by our volunteers, including safeguarding and supporting people who call us from prison. There has been a focus on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion training which was a mandated requirement from Central Office.

A new Service Level Agreement for branches who wish to provide support to callers via Email was published in May 2024 and Reading Branch has successfully applied to retain our status as a branch which supports callers by email. We have appointed an Email Champion. All our Leaders on Call have now completed Email training, enabling them to provide support to volunteers who are supporting callers by email. We have also encourages our volunteers to complete the digital email training topic. The numbers above show a modest increase in the number of emails answered by the branch, and we plan to further increase this in the coming year.

The national survey of Samaritans volunteers was completed in Summer 2024, and most of the feedback from our volunteers was encouraging:

- 98% of respondents are proud to volunteer for Samaritans
- 98% of respondents have confidence in the actions and direction provided by the leadership team at Reading Samaritans
- 98% of respondents felt that they had the right level of training to fulfil their role with Samaritans

Whilst the survey feedback was very positive overall, inevitably, there are some areas that require attention. In particular, some Reading volunteers expressed a view that they would welcome more feedback on how they were doing and that they would like more communications. The Branch Leadership Team has put plans in place to address these issues.

Volunteer numbers have remained reasonably stable throughout the year, although with some monthly fluctuations. We are continually reviewing the rota and shift coverage and we are taking active steps to improve retention such as social events, long service awards and thank you cards and training 'interest' events on topics of interest to volunteers.

We again had 3 cohorts of volunteers complete the initial training programme to become a Samaritans listening volunteer. In common with other Samaritans branches we found that volunteer applications have reduced somewhat over the year, and it has been a challenge to fill our training spaces. We have taken the decision to trial running two, larger cohorts of initial training during the calendar year 2025 and will evaluate the impact of this change when planning our 2026 initial training programme.

We have focussed on recruiting new mentors and held our second 'mentoring open evening' in September 2024, to encourage volunteers to learn more about mentoring and to take on a mentoring role. We recruited an additional four mentors as a result of this initiative, which we will repeat in 2025/6.

Ongoing Mentoring was completed during 2024. This gives all volunteers a valuable opportunity to receive feedback from a fellow volunteer and helps us to maintain our listening skills.

Community Outreach Programme

The outreach team have been involved in many community events over the past year. Our work to increase awareness of our service and provide emotional support has seen us attend organised events such as Woodley Carnival, Flackstock and Reading Pride. Each of these events served a diverse demographic and we sought to promote our service by engaging with the public directly.

In addition, we worked with Reading council to secure a space in Broad Street to reach into the heart of the Reading community and be a visible presence in the centre of town. One of our volunteers has also worked specifically with the council to support the development of a mental health and suicide first aid training programme for council employees.

Beyond community events, the outreach team have delivered several SHUHS listening talks to various organisations, including a Grundon manager's day, West Berkshire Schools Mental Health Leads conference and Pierre Fabre Group. We also delivered a series of talks for Thames Valley Police as part of a month of action which ran between World Suicide Prevention Day and World Mental Health Day.

The Schools team have continued to engage with local secondary schools, sixth forms and colleges to deliver listening tips talks to students as well as training on supporting their and others' mental wellbeing. The Network Rail team have also sustained their partnership with Reading Station and others in the local area, providing postvention after incidents as well as a 12-hour presence at the main station as part of *Small Talk Saves Lives* campaign in March. Moreover, our Prisons team have sustained their work with HMP Huntercombe by delivering regular training to residents and opportunities for support.

Branch Improvements

As part of a charity wide initiative funded by Samaritans Central Office, our LINK call system has been replaced by the more resilient "Listening Centre" which is a softphone/IT based solution removing the need for physical telephones on our duty stations. Our wireless and wired headsets and handsets now plug directly into our Chromeboxes and all other phone functionality is carried out on screen using a keyboard and mouse.

With the further success of grant applications, we continued with our efforts to reduce energy costs with a substantial addition to the loft insulation in our main building as well as the introduction of a new smart thermostat which allows remote access to our boiler to turn down or switch off the heating if the building is unexpectedly unoccupied such as a cancelled shift. The volunteer comfort level has improved and the benefits of replacing our leaking and draughty ground floor entrance and fire exit doors last year was noticeable during the winter months.

More renovation work has been completed including the full refurbishment of our two large steel driveway gates which had become rusty with flaking paint from years of exposure to the elements.

As our IT and telephony systems are now fully up to date and we've implemented the more affordable recommendations for energy efficiency, we will continue our plans to refurbish the remaining untouched rooms in the main building including the kitchen, volunteer toilet and shower room, as funding becomes available.

FUTURE PLANS

The priority of the Reading Samaritans is to ensure we have a safe and supportive environment for all volunteers, increase volunteer numbers and engage with the local community in an increased capacity.

The focus for the coming year is to further improve our retention of volunteers by ensuring that our volunteers feel supported and that they are part of a community. We are going to trial the reintroduction of support groups to continue building the sense of community in the branch.

We will continue our efforts to recruit and train more mentors, so that we can ensure that new volunteers get the opportunity to work with two mentors and see the range of 'styles' that we bring and also to alleviate the pressure on mentors.

We are going to include email training as part of Embedding (the further training provided to volunteers during mentoring and probation) as part of a programme of work to encourage volunteers to support email callers. We are also introducing email mentors, to support volunteers who are new to email, ensuring that they are confident and competent to provide support to our email callers.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Results for the Period

Income from all sources amounted to £36,440 while total expenditure was £38,598, which resulted in a loss for the year of £2,158.

Financial Highlights

Reading Samaritans received some very generous support in the year that enabled further refurbishment of the centre meaning we are in a good position for years to come. We also received generous support from local businesses, groups and individuals in the period. These include R Bion Ltd as well as a generous donation from St Laurence Church.

We also wish to extend our gratitude to all other local businesses and groups who continue to support us. These funds are crucial in enabling us to continue with the day to day running of the charity.

Our volunteers support us not just with their time but by their amazing fundraising efforts. These include sponsored sporting events and street collections. Many volunteers also donated back monies due to them by way of travel expenses which allowed Reading Samaritans to claim a further £2.7K in Gift Aid.

Our current volunteers, previous volunteers and other members of the community participate in our monthly lottery called the 100 Club, which raised £3.1K in subscriptions in the period.

We are fortunate to be supported by Post Code Lottery support to assist us with our recruitment and training. We also receive National Samaritans Charity support allows us to continue our work with Huntercombe Prison.

With the continued reduced fundraising and awareness we have been fortunate in securing grants of £2K from Groundworks to support our energy efficiency at our Centre.

Most of the expenditure in the period was incurred on centre running costs, centre facilities updates and ensuring we are properly insured for our activities. The additional grants received have also enabled us to refurbish the main building.

Reserves Policy

Reading Samaritans maintains unrestricted reserves:

- To provide a level of working capital that protects the continuity of our work;
- To provide a level of funding for unexpected opportunities; and
- To provide cover for risks such as unforeseen expenditure or unanticipated loss of income.

Reading Samaritans' Trustees are responsible for determining the appropriate level of reserves for the branch to hold. The current policy is to hold reserves equivalent to 18 months expenditure which

is both the reserves level the Trustee Board determine appropriate and also the expectation of the National Samaritans Charity.

Unrestricted reserves held at 31st March 2025 were 22.7 months or £67,938 so slightly above our target.

Restricted funds are designated separately and are used in accordance with agreements between Reading Samaritans and the relevant fund providers such as the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) and Postcode Lottery. At 31st March 2025, there were £0 restricted funds as we spent according to agreements.

Reserves are held in current or accessible savings accounts to ensure the branch activities can operate smoothly.

Financial Policies and Control

Reading Samaritans has a detailed financial policy framework, reviewed and approved by the external charity oversight organisation Reading Voluntary Action.

The branch accounts comply with statutory requirements and with the branch constitution.

The Trustees believe the existing controls are adequate to safeguard the assets of the charity.

Payments to Trustees

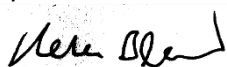
No remuneration was paid to any of the Trustees. Where appropriate, Trustees have been reimbursed for expenses incurred in performing their duties as a Listener, in their Management/Support Volunteer roles or as a Trustee. As with all expenses, these are reviewed and approved by at least 2 signatories. Under no circumstances does the Trustee claiming expenses approve their own expenses.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUSTEES

The trustees are responsible for preparing the annual report and financial statements in accordance with Charity Commission guidelines. The annual report and financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Charity Commission guidelines. These financial statements have been reviewed and approved by an independent examiner.

The trustees are responsible for keeping sufficient accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time, the financial position of the charity. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

By order of the Trustees



Helen Blanchard

Director and Chair of the Trustee Board [since September 2023]

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS**Registered Name**

Reading Samaritans is a registered charity, with charity registration number 1170632.

Registered and Operational Address

59a Cholmeley Road
Reading, Berkshire
RG1 3NB

The Trustees**Current Trustees**

Helen Blanchard	<i>Director and Chair</i>
Ester May	<i>Vice Director to 9/4/2025</i>
Hetal Patel	<i>Secretary</i>
Elizabeth Hayes	
Justin Bedingfeld	<i>Treasurer</i>
Dave Calver	<i>to 10/10/2024</i>
Darren Jones	
Joanna Hayes	<i>to 10/10/2024</i>
Angelina Lewis	<i>to 10/10/2024</i>
Sophie Mcbean	
Sarah Bowsher	
Atul Khetarpal	<i>From 10/10/2024</i>



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the
accounts

Section A Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees

Reading Samaritans

**On accounts for the year
ended**

31/03/25

**Charity no
(if any)**

1170632

Set out on pages

13 to 17

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity
("the Trust") for the year ended .

**Responsibilities and basis of
report**

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in
accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under
section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all
the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b)
of the Act.

Independent examiner's
statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination (~~other than that disclosed below*~~) which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

*Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.

Signed:

Christine Holland

Date:

31/8/2025.

Name:

christine holland

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body (if
any):

CIPFA.

Address:

9 Ellerton Close, Theale
Reading
RG7 5DN.



RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNTS

Receipts and payments

	<i>Note</i>	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds Year Ended 31 March 2025 £	Last Year £
Receipts					
Donations	2	7,571	-	7,571	28,314
Revenue Grants	3	1,323	2,599	3,922	15,929
Fundraising	4	24,045	-	24,045	15,482
Bank and Building Society Interest	5	902	-	902	584
Total receipts		33,841	2,599	36,440	60,309
Payments					
Direct and Charitable Expenditure	6	26,248	7,372	33,620	47,708
Fundraising Costs	7	2,268	-	2,268	2,862
Management and Administration	8	699	-	699	433
Contribution to Central Charity	9	2,011	-	2,011	1,342
Total payments		31,225	7,372	38,598	52,345
Net of receipts / (payments)		2,615	-4,773	-2,158	7,964
Cash funds last year					
		65,322	4,773	70,096	62,132
Cash funds this year		67,938	0	67,938	70,096

Statement of assets and liabilities as at 31 March 2025

	<i>Note</i>	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds Year Ended 31 March 2025 £	Last Year £
Cash funds					
Coop Current Account		4,718	0	4,718	9,046
HSBC Deposit Account		5,403	0	5,403	4,046
Virgin Money Deposit Account		57,817	0	57,817	57,004
Total cash funds		67,938	0	67,938	70,096

NOTES TO THE RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNTS

(1) Accounting Policies

Basis for Accounts Preparation

The accounts have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis in accordance with Charity Commission guidance.

Income

All income is accounted for when received. Income is allocated by category to enable analysis of income sources at any time.

Expenditure

Expenditure is accounted for when it is paid and is classified under headings that aggregate costs to a category. Expenditure includes VAT which cannot be recovered.

Expenditure is broken down into four categories:

- Direct and Charitable Expenditure
- Fundraising Costs;
- Management and Administration; and
- Contribution to Central Charity.

There are notes to the accounts showing what is included in each of these categories.

Tangible Fixed Assets

All tangible fixed assets have been expensed. However, all items that cost more than £1,000 are listed on an asset register.

Funds

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objects at the discretion of the Trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for certain activities as specified by the donor or the fundraising process. Relevant expenditure is categorised against each fund.

Details of Receipts**(2) Donations**

Donations	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Last Year
	£	£	Year Ended 31 March 2025 £	£
Individuals	1,249	-	1,249	999
Churches	1,000	-	1,000	1,000
Groups in the Community	-	-	-	369
Gift Aid	2,700	-	2,700	2,150
Bequests	1,817	-	1,817	23,068
Street Collections	805	-	805	727
Total	7,571	-	7,571	28,314

(3) Revenue Grants

Revenue Grants	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Last Year
	£	£	Year Ended 31 March 2025 £	£
National Offender Management Service	1,323	716	2,039	4,179
Postcode Lottery	-	-	-	3,800
GWR SCC Grant	-	-	-	3,950
Green Hall				4,000
Groundwork	-	1,883	1,883	-
Total	1,323	2,599	3,922	15,929

(4) Fundraising

Fundraising	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Last Year
	£	£	Year Ended 31 March 2025 £	£
Business and Corporate Fundraising	11,000	-	11,000	5,025
100 Club	3,107	-	3,107	3,211
Volunteer Initiated Fundraising	2,024	-	2,024	149
Witt Morgan Concerts	-	-	-	-
FIT Payments	1,328	-	1,328	101
Festival Branch Store Rental	550	-	550	500
Sarah Millican	653	-	653	-
Easy Fundraising, Amazon Smile etc	5,309	-	5,309	6,313
Other	74	-	74	183
Total	24,045	-	24,045	15,482

(5) Bank and Building Society Interest

Bank and Building Society Interest	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds Year Ended 31 March 2025	Last Year
	£	£	£	£
HSBC	89	-	89	54
Virgin	813	-	813	530
Total	902	-	902	584

Details of Expenditure**(6) Direct and Charitable Expenditure**

Direct and Charitable Expenditure	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds Year Ended 31 March 2025	Last Year
	£	£	£	£
Fabric of the Centre	5,265	-	5,265	9,231
Maintenance Contracts	3,848	-	3,848	4,861
Utilities	5,964	-	5,964	5,357
Housekeeping	5,180	-	5,180	3,252
Equipping the Centre	2,089	-	2,089	6,374
Volunteer Expenses	91	-	91	258
Conference/Meeting Fees	-	-	-	-
Outreach	564	-	564	808
Committee Hospitality and Other Costs	19	-	19	164
Volunteer Recognition and Retention	3,227	-	3,227	3,619
Gift Aiding of Expenses	-	-	-	-
Reading Borough Council	-	-	-	3,750
NOMS (see Restricted Expenditure Note)	-	1,690	1,690	1,066
Reading CIC	-	-	-	131
Postcode Lottery	-	3,800	3,800	-
GWR SCC Grant	-	-	-	4,527
Sykes Foundation	-	-	-	310
Green Hall	-	-	-	4,000
Groundwork	-	1,883	1,883	-
Total	26,248	7,372	33,620	47,708

Fundraising Costs

Fundraising Costs	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds Year Ended 31 March 2025	Last Year
	£	£	£	£
Raising Branch Income	403	-	403	742
100 Club	1,865	-	1,865	2,120
Gift Aiding of Expenses	-	-	-	-
Total	2,268	-	2,268	2,862

(7) Management and Administration

Management and Administration	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds Year Ended 31 March 2025 £	Last Year £
Phone Calls	132	-	132	-
Travel Claims	94	-	94	62
Stationery and Postage	-	-	-	50
Professional Fees	35	-	35	-
AGM and Annual Review	438	-	438	321
Total	699	-	699	433

(8) Contribution to Central Charity

Contribution to Central Charity	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds Year Ended 31 March 2025 £	Last Year £
Branch Contribution	2,011	-	2,011	1,342
Total	2,011	-	2,011	1,342

(9) Restricted Funds

Restricted Funds	1 st April 2024	Income	Expenditure	31 st March 2025
Reading Borough Council	-	-	-	0
National Offender Management Scheme (NOMS)	973	716	1,690	0
Postcode Lottery	3,800	-	3,800	-
GWR SCC Grant	0	-	-	0
Groundwork	-	1,883	1,883	-
Total	4,773	2,599	7,372	0

Restricted funds include the following:

- NOMS grant for our Huntercombe Prison support
- Post Code Lottery Funding used for recruitment, training and Training Centre
- Groundwork used to improve building efficiency

Accounts

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TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT
AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1 APRIL 2023 TO 31 MARCH 2024

Charity Registration Number: 1170632

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INTRODUCTION

Reading Samaritans is a charity based in Reading serving both the local area and wider community. It is a recognised branch of the national Samaritans Charity and, as one of around 200 branches, provides emotional support across the country.

The Reading Samaritans' trustees present their annual report and financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2024.

SAMARITANS VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

Samaritans' vision is that fewer people die by suicide. We work to achieve this vision by making it our mission to alleviate emotional distress and reduce the incidence of suicidal feelings and suicidal behaviour.

We are committed to the following values:

- Listening;
- Confidentiality;
- People making their own decision;
- Being non-judgemental; and
- Human contact.

CHARITY OBJECTIVES

The objectives of Reading Samaritans are:

- I) To enable persons in Reading and the surrounding area as well as elsewhere who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those who may be at risk of suicide, to receive confidential emotional support at any time of the day or night in order to improve their emotional health and to reduce the incidence of suicide;
- II) To promote a better understanding in society of suicide, suicidal behaviour and the value of expressing feelings which may otherwise lead to suicide or impaired emotional health; and
- III) To collaborate with and support Samaritans Central Charity and its affiliated branches in fulfilling these objectives.

CHARITY ACTIVITIES

The charity offers support to those who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those who may be at risk of suicide by being there to listen and encourage the recognition and exploration of their options. By doing so we aim to help people find ways of coping with their current feelings.

Reading Samaritans Outreach provides services to schools, higher education institutions, companies and at local events. We also work locally providing regular support in Huntercombe Prison and at local railway stations. We aim to increase awareness of our services in all sectors of the community by giving awareness talks, attending local public events and working with other organisations.

These activities are carried out by Reading Samaritans for the benefit of the local and wider community and with due regard of the guidance on public benefit published by the Charity Commission.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

While Reading Samaritans is a longstanding organisation in Reading, it was incorporated as a separate Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) on 8 December 2016.

Reading Samaritans is a recognised branch of Samaritans, with the national Samaritans Charity providing support services such as training materials and guidance. This relationship is governed by an Operating Agreement which ensures all branches adhere to the same required standards, while recognising that branches have their own leadership team and are responsible for fundraising and overall governance.

Reading Samaritans activities are wholly performed by our committed group of around 120 volunteers and we have no employees. The charity is managed by the leadership team, comprised of trustees and deputy directors. The branch Director, also a trustee, is responsible for the day to day management of the charity's activities including matters arising relating to callers and volunteers. The Director is supported in their role by a team of deputy directors who have specific roles and responsibilities.

The Trustee Board oversees the charity and have collective and ultimate responsibility for governing the charity and directing how it is managed and run. Trustees place a high priority on ensuring high standards of governance including management of risk assessment processes. Trustees are recruited from both within the charity and externally to ensure Reading Samaritans has a balanced and appropriately skilled Trustee Board. The trustee hiring process involves interviews and background checks. Following this, the Trustee Board must vote on the admission of new trustees. Members of Reading Samaritans also vote whether to re-elect each trustee at the Annual General Meeting. New trustees are provided with an initial information pack and are required to complete online training designed by the national Samaritans Charity.

Full leadership team meetings are held at least every 3 months, with separate Trustee Board and deputy director meetings held in the intervening months. Decisions are taken at meetings where trustees are present, with a simple majority of trustees required for decisions to be passed. Additional meetings are held when required and decisions can be made outside of these meetings if needed.

ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Support Provided

Reading Samaritans volunteers continue to provide vital support to callers. Numbers of calls are slightly higher compared to the previous year, with a continued reduction in emails reflecting changes in working practices.

- 15,457 telephone calls (14,878 in 2022/23)
- 221 emails (594 in 2022/23)

Our volunteers and Rota Secretaries continue to work hard to ensure that we cover as many shifts as possible. Reading Samaritans meets the standard set for us in our Agreement with the Samaritans Central Charity for covering hours of need shifts, when callers need us the most. Our 2023/4 performance is summarised on the table below.

Category	Time	Target	Reading Sams 2023/24
Twilight	22.00 – 02.00	20%	21.1%
Overnight	02.00 – 06.00	10%	12.8%

Key Developments

The branch was very fortunate to receive a generous £20,000 legacy from one of our former volunteers, Dorothy. We have used some of this money, along with other donations and grants to complete the work to modernise our premises and to buy new equipment, so that we have a comfortable, modern base and the facilities that we need to support our callers. We have also used the funding to pay for some modest thank you gifts for our longer standing volunteers and have set some money aside for a branch meeting and training session in the next financial year.

Volunteer numbers have remained reasonably stable throughout the year, although with some monthly fluctuations. We are continually reviewing the rota and shift coverage and we are taking active steps to improve retention such as social events, long service awards and thank you cards and training 'interest' events on topics of interest to volunteers.

Over the past six months we have particularly focussed upon supporting and retaining our volunteers during their Probationary period with us as we have found that we unfortunately are more likely to lose volunteers during this time. We have changed the way that we provide Embedding training to our Mentees and Probationers and this has proved to be a positive and popular change, providing more face to face training and support to this group of volunteers.

We again had 3 cohorts of volunteers complete the initial training programme to become a Samaritans listening volunteer and volunteer applications continue to be strong. There has also been a focus on the Keeping Data Safe in Samaritans training which was a mandated requirement from Central Office. We have also run a number of interest sessions open to all volunteers, including two very well attended sessions on domestic abuse, delivered by Berkshire Women's Aid and a session on supporting callers in prison.

Ongoing Mentoring restarted in the branch in September 2023, after a break due to the pandemic. This gives all volunteers a valuable opportunity to receive feedback from a fellow volunteer and helps us to maintain our listening skills.

Community Outreach Programme

The last year has seen a continued broadening of our outreach efforts, with established partnerships continuing and new opportunities being explored. We have kept a busy diary, including hosting talks to organisations, attending community events, supporting local schools and working with Great Western Railway and Network Rail.

We have attended events in and around Reading including Reading Pride (supporting the LGBTQ+ community), East Reading Festival, Woodley Carnival and Flackstock. All of these events have served as valuable opportunities to promote our service and increase awareness of Samaritans, as well as provide emotional support to the public if required. To get into the heart of our community, we also held a stall in Broad Street in Reading for a day in February. This proved to be incredibly worthwhile as we had many useful conversations about Samaritans, provided emotional support to several members of the public and also managed to raise £400 for the branch.

The hard work has also continued in the schools team, with many secondary schools and colleges, as well as Reading University, benefiting from visits and listening tips presentations. Staff have also been trained to support students. Our railway partnership has worked alongside staff at Reading station to deliver postvention support after deaths by suicide on the local railways. The team were hosted for a day in March to support the *Small Talk Saves Lives* campaign for both station staff and the public.

We have continued to work with the Royal Berkshire Hospital to receive email referrals from their A&E department and contact patients after presentation to the hospital. Furthermore, we have worked to develop additional relationships with other organisations. We have worked with Berkshire Women's Aid (BWA) to deliver training to their employees around listening skills, self-harm and suicide. In turn, BWA held two training sessions for our volunteers to explore the topic of domestic abuse to enable us to support callers with these concerns better. We have also worked with a fan support group from Reading Football Club (Talking Royals) and have attended two of their meetings to raise awareness of Samaritans and deliver talks in line with the SHUSH listening tips and *Small Talk Saves Lives* campaign.

In order to continue to develop the capacity of our outreach offer, 15 new volunteers have recently been outreach trained, enabling them to deliver emotional support outside of the branch and looking ahead to 2024-2025 we have a full programme of events for the local community.

Branch Improvements

As part of a charity wide initiative funded by Samaritans Central Office, all of our telephony and internet services are now delivered digitally via full fibre broadband direct to the branch. The new system known as VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol), including the implementation of new telephones and IT networking equipment, has resulted in improved call audio quality and more reliable call connections, meaning fewer drop outs and lost calls. Further benefits include no outgoing call charges and our on-going monthly service costs are now paid for by Samaritans Central Office.

The continued success of grant applications and a number of generous bequests during the year allowed us to complete more renovation work than we had originally budgeted for so the majority of the main building refurbishment is now complete. The most significant building improvement has been the replacement of our 40+ year old entrance door and fire exit door with more secure,

draught free and energy efficient ones. To further reduce energy costs, both of our buildings are now utilising our existing solar panel installation and all internal and external lighting across the site has been changed to low energy LED bulbs.

FUTURE PLANS

The priority of the Reading Samaritans is to ensure we have a safe and supportive environment for all volunteers, increase volunteer numbers and engage with the local community in an increased capacity.

The focus for the coming months is to improve our retention of volunteers by ensuring that our volunteers feel supported and that they are part of a community. We are planning an event to recognise our longer standing volunteers, together with a combined branch meeting and training event. We would also like to recruit and train more mentors, so that we can ensure that new volunteers get the opportunity to work with two mentors and see the range of 'styles' that we bring and also to alleviate the pressure on mentors.

A new Service Level Agreement for branches who wish to provide support to callers via Email is due to be published in May 2024 and work is underway to prepare the branch to meet the terms of the agreement so that we can continue to support callers in this way. Preparation includes encouraging volunteers to complete the digital email training topic, with email mentoring support available if required.

Upcoming plans for the branch include the Samaritans wide replacement of the LINK call system in the autumn, incorporating further enhancements to our telephony system. This will include automatically switching our broadband service to a 4G mobile signal in the event that the main cable connection to our branch is unavailable.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Results for the Period

Income from all sources amounted to £60,309 while total expenditure was £52,345, which resulted in a profit for the year of £7,964.

Financial Highlights

Reading Samaritans received some very generous bequests in the year that enabled further refurbishment of the centre meaning we are in a good position for years to come.

We also received generous support from local businesses, groups and individuals in the period. These include R Bion Ltd, and Man the Lifeboats as well as a generous donation from St Laurence Church.

We also wish to extend our gratitude to all other local businesses and groups who continue to support us. These funds are crucial in enabling us to continue with the day to day running of the charity.

Our volunteers support us not just with their time but by their amazing fundraising efforts. These include sponsored sporting events and street collections. Many volunteers also donated back monies due to them by way of travel expenses which allowed Reading Samaritans to claim a further £2.1K in Gift Aid.

Our current volunteers, previous volunteers and other members of the community participate in our monthly lottery called the 100 Club, which raised £3.2K in subscriptions in the period.

We are fortunate to be supported by Reading Borough Council who provided support to assist us with our recruitment and training. We also receive national Samaritans Charity support that allows us to continue our work with Huntercombe Prison.

With the continued reduced fundraising and awareness we have been fortunate in securing grants of £4K Postcode Lottery, £4K from GWR / SWR and £4K from the Green Hall Foundation.

Most of the expenditure in the period was incurred on centre running costs, centre facilities updates and ensuring we are properly insured for our activities. The additional grants received have also enabled us to refurbish the main building.

Reserves Policy

Reading Samaritans maintains unrestricted reserves:

- To provide a level of working capital that protects the continuity of our work;
- To provide a level of funding for unexpected opportunities; and
- To provide cover for risks such as unforeseen expenditure or unanticipated loss of income.

Reading Samaritans' Trustees are responsible for determining the appropriate level of reserves for the branch to hold. The current policy is to hold reserves equivalent to 18 months expenditure which is both the reserves level the Trustee Board determine appropriate and also the expectation of the National Samaritans Charity.

Unrestricted reserves held at 31st March 2024 were 18.1 months or £58,282 which is a exactly per policy as we managed the expenditure in line with the bequest received

Restricted funds are designated separately and are used in accordance with agreements between Reading Samaritans and the relevant fund providers such as the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) and Postcode Lottery. At 31st March 2024, there was £4,773 of restricted funds.

Reserves are held in current or accessible savings accounts to ensure the branch activities can operate smoothly.

Financial Policies and Control

Reading Samaritans has a detailed financial policy framework, reviewed and approved by the external charity oversight organisation Reading Voluntary Action.

The branch accounts comply with statutory requirements and with the branch constitution.

The Trustees believe the existing controls are adequate to safeguard the assets of the charity.

Payments to Trustees

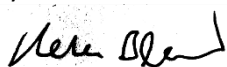
No remuneration was paid to any of the Trustees. Where appropriate, Trustees have been reimbursed for expenses incurred in performing their duties as a Listener, in their Management/Support Volunteer roles or as a Trustee. As with all expenses, these are reviewed and approved by at least 2 signatories. Under no circumstances does the Trustee claiming expenses approve their own expenses.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUSTEES

The trustees are responsible for preparing the annual report and financial statements in accordance with Charity Commission guidelines. The annual report and financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Charity Commission guidelines. These financial statements have been reviewed and approved by an independent examiner.

The trustees are responsible for keeping sufficient accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time, the financial position of the charity. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

By order of the Trustees



Helen Blanchard

Director and Chair of the Trustee Board [since September 2023]

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS**Registered Name**

Reading Samaritans is a registered charity, with charity registration number 1170632.

Registered and Operational Address

59a Cholmeley Road
Reading, Berkshire
RG1 3NB

The Trustees**Current Trustees**

Helen Blanchard	<i>Director and Chair</i>
Ester May	<i>Vice Director</i>
Hetal Patel	<i>Secretary</i>
Elizabeth Hayes	
Justin Bedingfeld	<i>Treasurer</i>
Dave Calver	
Darren Jones	
Joanna Hayes	
Angelina Lewis	
Sophie Mcbean	
Sarah Bowsher	

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of the Reading Samaritans on the accounts for the year ending 31 March 2024

Responsibilities and basis of report

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity ("the Trust") on pages 12 to 18 for the year ended 31 March 2024.

As the charity trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records
- the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

 Date 11 August 2024
Christine Holland CPFA
9 Ellerton Close
Theale
Reading RG7 5QN

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNTS

Receipts and payments

	<i>Note</i>	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds Year Ended 31 March 2024	Last Year
		£	£	£	£
Receipts					
Donations	2	28,314	-	28,314	4,285
Revenue Grants	3	1,223	14,706	15,929	17,092
Fundraising	4	15,482	-	15,482	15,492
Bank and Building Society Interest	5	584	-	584	172
Total receipts		45,603	14,706	60,309	37,041
Payments					
Direct and Charitable Expenditure	6	33,925	13,783	47,708	40,032
Fundraising Costs	7	2,862	-	2,862	2,542
Management and Administration	8	433	-	433	295
Contribution to Central Charity	9	1,342	-	1,342	1,128
Total payments		38,562	13,783	52,345	43,997
Net of receipts / (payments)		7,041	923	7,964	-6,956
Cash funds last year					
Cash funds this year					
		58,282	3,850	62,132	69,087
		65,322	4,773	70,096	62,132

Statement of assets and liabilities as at 31 March 2024

	<i>Note</i>	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds Year Ended 31 March 2024	Last Year
		£	£	£	£
Cash funds					
Coop Current Account		4,273	4,773	9,046	8,116
HSBC Deposit Account		4,046	0	4,046	2,547
Virgin Money Deposit Account		57,004	0	57,004	51,469
Total cash funds		65,322	4,773	70,096	62,132

NOTES TO THE RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNTS

(1) Accounting Policies

Basis for Accounts Preparation

The accounts have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis in accordance with Charity Commission guidance.

Income

All income is accounted for when received. Income is allocated by category to enable analysis of income sources at any time.

Expenditure

Expenditure is accounted for when it is paid and is classified under headings that aggregate costs to a category. Expenditure includes VAT which cannot be recovered.

Expenditure is broken down into four categories:

- Direct and Charitable Expenditure
- Fundraising Costs;
- Management and Administration; and
- Contribution to Central Charity.

There are notes to the accounts showing what is included in each of these categories.

Tangible Fixed Assets

All tangible fixed assets have been expensed. However, all items that cost more than £1,000 are listed on an asset register.

Funds

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objects at the discretion of the Trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for certain activities as specified by the donor or the fundraising process. Relevant expenditure is categorised against each fund.

Details of Receipts**(2) Donations**

Donations	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds Year Ended 31 March 2024	Last Year
	£	£	£	£
Individuals	999	-	999	601
Churches	1,000	-	1,000	1,000
Groups in the Community	369	-	369	620
Gift Aid	2,150	-	2,150	1,563
Bequests	23,068	-	23,068	-
Street Collections	727	-	727	501
Total	28,314	-	28,314	4,285

(3) Revenue Grants

Revenue Grants	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds Year Ended 31 March 2024	Last Year
	£	£	£	£
National Offender Management Service	1,223	2,956	4,179	1,879
Reading Borough Council	-	-	-	6,013
Sykes	-	-	-	1,000
Reading Community	-	-	-	250
Earley Charity	-	-	-	3,000
Berkshire Community Foundation	-	-	-	2,800
Postcode Lottery	-	3,800	3,800	-
GWR SCC Grant	-	3,950	3,950	2,150
Grant Hall	-	4,000	4,000	-
Total	1,223	14,706	15,929	17,092

(4) Fundraising

Fundraising	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds Year Ended 31 March 2024	Last Year
	£	£	£	£
Business and Corporate Fundraising	5,025	-	5,025	5,348
100 Club	3,211	-	3,211	3,068
Volunteer Initiated Fundraising	149	-	149	579
Witt Morgan Concerts	-	-	-	529
FIT Payments	101	-	101	650
Festival Branch Store Rental	500	-	500	500
Sarah Millican	-	-	-	2,005
Easy Fundraising, Amazon Smile etc	6,313	-	6,313	2,587
Other	183	-	183	226
Total	15,482	-	15,482	15,492

(5) Bank and Building Society Interest

Bank and Building Society Interest	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds Year Ended 31 March 2024	Last Year
	£	£	£	£
HSBC	54	-	54	2
Virgin	530	-	530	170
Total	584	-	584	172

Details of Expenditure**(6) Direct and Charitable Expenditure**

Direct and Charitable Expenditure	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds Year Ended 31 March 2024 £	Last Year £
Fabric of the Centre	9,231	-	9,231	10,788
Maintenance Contracts	4,861	-	4,861	3,807
Utilities	5,357	-	5,357	3,989
Housekeeping	3,252	-	3,252	2,912
Equipping the Centre	6,374	-	6,374	2,114
Volunteer Expenses	258	-	258	465
Conference/Meeting Fees	-	-	-	10
Outreach	808	-	808	101
Committee Hospitality and Other Costs	164	-	164	22
Volunteer Recognition and Retention	3,619	-	3,619	2,498
Gift Aiding of Expenses	-	-	-	-
Reading Borough Council	-	3,750	3,750	2,263
NOMS (see Restricted Expenditure Note	-	1,066	1,066	1,777
Reading CIC	-	131	131	132
Postcode Lottery	-	-	-	-
Berkshire Community Foundation	-	-	-	2,800
Pears Grant	-	-	-	-
GWR SCC Grant	-	4,527	4,527	2,414
Sykes Foundation	-	310	310	690
Reading Community	-	-	-	250
Earley Charity	-	-	-	3,000
Green Hall	-	4,000	4,000	-
Total	33,925	13,783	47,708	40,032

Fundraising Costs

Fundraising Costs	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds Year Ended 31 March 2024 £	Last Year £
Raising Branch Income	742	-	742	647
100 Club	2,120	-	2,120	1,895
Gift Aiding of Expenses	-	-	-	-
Total	2,862	-	2,862	2,542

(7) Management and Administration

Management and Administration	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds Year Ended 31 March 2024	Last Year
	£	£	£	£
Phone Calls	-	-	-	-
Travel Claims	62	-	62	-
Stationery and Postage	50	-	50	-
Hospitality	-	-	-	-
Committee Member Expenses	-	-	-	-
Professional Fees	-	-	-	26
AGM and Annual Review	321	-	321	268
Total	433	-	433	294

(8) Contribution to Central Charity

Contribution to Central Charity	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds Year Ended 31 March 2024	Last Year
	£	£	£	£
Branch Contribution	1,342	-	1,342	1,128
Total	1,342	-	1,342	1,128

(9) Restricted Funds

Restricted Funds	1st April 2023	Income	Expenditure	31st March 2024
Reading Borough Council	3,750	-	3,750	0
National Offender Management Scheme (NOMS)	- 918	2,956	1,066	972
Sykes Foundation	310	-	310	- 0
Reading CIC Grant	131	-	131	0
Reading Community	-	-	-	-
Earley Charity	-	-	-	-
Berkshire Community Foundation	-	-	-	-
Postcode Lottery	-	3,800	-	3,800
GWR SCC Grant	577	3,950	4,527	0
Green Hall	-	4,000	4,000	-
Total	3,850	14,706	13,783	4,773

Restricted funds include the following:

- Reading Borough Council grant used for recruitment and training costs including printing, some electricity and cost of training sessions
- NOMS grant for our Huntercombe Prison support
- Sykes Donation used for external training
- Reading CIC grant for Outreach events in Reading the town centre
- GWR grant to cover Outreach events, materials and training of new volunteers
- Green Hall Foundation used to upgrade doors in our main building

Accounts

READING SAMARITANS
TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT
AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1 APRIL 2022 TO 31 MARCH 2023

Charity Registration Number: 1170632

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INTRODUCTION

Reading Samaritans is a charity based in Reading serving both the local area and wider community. It is a recognised branch of the national Samaritans Charity and, as one of around 200 branches, provides emotional support across the country.

The Reading Samaritans' trustees present their annual report and financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2023.

SAMARITANS VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

Samaritan's vision is that fewer people die by suicide. We work to achieve this vision by making it our mission to alleviate emotional distress and reduce the incidence of suicidal feelings and suicidal behaviour.

We are committed to the following values:

- Listening;
- Confidentiality;
- People making their own decision;
- Being non-judgemental; and
- Human contact.

CHARITY OBJECTIVES

The objectives of Reading Samaritans are:

- I) To enable persons in Reading and the surrounding area as well as elsewhere who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those who may be at risk of suicide, to receive confidential emotional support at any time of the day or night in order to improve their emotional health and to reduce the incidence of suicide;
- II) To promote a better understanding in society of suicide, suicidal behaviour and the value of expressing feelings which may otherwise lead to suicide or impaired emotional health; and
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The charity offers support to those who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those who may be at risk of suicide by being there to listen and encourage the recognition and exploration of their options. By doing so we aim to help people find ways of coping with their current feelings.

Reading Samaritans Outreach provides services to schools, higher education institutions, companies and at local events. We also work locally providing regular support in Huntercombe Prison and at local railway stations. We aim to increase awareness of our services in all sectors of the community by giving awareness talks, attending local public events and working with other organisations.

These activities are carried out by Reading Samaritans for the benefit of the local and wider community and with due regard of the guidance on public benefit published by the Charity Commission.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

While Reading Samaritans is a longstanding organisation in Reading, it was incorporated as a separate Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) on 8 December 2016.

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Reading Samaritans activities are wholly performed by our committed group of around 120 volunteers and we have no employees. The charity is managed by the leadership team, comprised of trustees and deputy directors. The branch Director, also a trustee, is responsible for the day to day management of the charity's activities including matters arising relating to callers and volunteers. The Director is supported in their role by a team of deputy directors who have specific roles and responsibilities.

The Trustee Board of trustees oversee the charity and have collective and ultimate responsibility for governing the charity and directing how it is managed and run. Trustees place a high priority on ensuring high standards of governance including management of risk assessment processes. Trustees are recruited from both within the charity and externally to ensure Reading Samaritans has a balanced and appropriately skilled Trustee Board. The trustee hiring process involves interviews and background checks. Following this, the Trustee Board must vote on the admission of new trustees. Members of Reading Samaritans also vote whether to re-elect each trustee at the Annual General Meeting. New trustees are provided with an initial information pack and are required to complete online training designed by the national Samaritans Charity.

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ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Support Provided

Reading Samaritans volunteers continue to provide vital support to callers. Numbers of calls are similar to the previous year, with a reduction in emails reflecting changes in working practices.

- 14,878 telephone calls
- 594 emails

Key Developments

This year has seen the branch come through the Covid pandemic and whilst all restrictions have been removed, we have continued to support all our volunteers coming back into branch to ensure they feel safe.

Volunteer numbers and retention have been an issue and a focus due to a small decline in volunteer numbers. This is partly due to some volunteers unfortunately deciding not to return to the branch after the Covid pandemic and lower retention of new volunteers. We are continually reviewing the rota and shift coverage and we are taking active steps to improve retention such as social events, branch surveys and bringing many activities back face to face in the branch which increases interaction.

We again had 3 cohorts of volunteers complete the initial training programme to become a Samaritans listening volunteer and volunteer applications continue to be strong. There has also been a focus on the Applying Key Policies training which was a mandated requirement from Central Office. All training sessions for Core Development and Applying Key Policies have been delivered face to face which has had a positive impact on all concerned.

Community Outreach Programme

Reading Samaritans have moved back into a more active Outreach approach for much of the year, as we've been able to get out to visit those groups we want to focus on. We have seen a wider programme of events, including Reading Pride (a regular event in the diary where we support the LGBTQ+ community), supporting the Flackstock event in celebration of the life of Caroline Flack, and holding our own community event in Reading for anyone to come along and learn about the work of Samaritans.

We continue to work with existing partnerships, such as local schools and Reading University, where we have a team who focus on this important area, as well as a local NHS Partnership and a charity supporting veterans. Another key partnership is the Railway industry, where we have attended events with Network Rail and the British Transport Police. We are currently in partnership with a local IT company who are raising money for us.

During the year Reading Samaritans has endeavoured to make use of any opportunities to raise awareness of the work we do, and this has seen our volunteers attend multiple events throughout the year. Examples include Woodley Carnival, providing suicide awareness support to Thames Valley Police, and working with volunteers at Colostomy UK. In addition to this, we have delivered awareness talks and training in listening skills for several local organisations. Looking ahead to 2023-2024, we have a full programme of events for the local community.

Branch Improvements

The continued success of grant applications during the year allowed us to complete more renovation work than we had originally budgeted for. Renovation of our training centre, Friends House, was completed with the redecoration and installation of new disabled toilet facilities as well as updating the external windows and doors with more secure and energy efficient uPVC replacements.

We continued to improve lighting in the main building with the installation of more energy efficient LED lights.

FUTURE PLANS

The priority of the Reading Samaritans is to ensure we have a safe and supportive environment for all volunteers, increase volunteer numbers and engage with the local community in an increased capacity.

The focus for the coming months is to increase outreach activity wherever possible and attend as many local events as we can support. The branch leadership team made the very difficult decision not to reintroduce face to face calls in the branch due to safety concerns, so it was felt that we needed to increase our outreach activity to ensure local engagement continues.

Upcoming plans for the branch include the replacement of our old analogue telephone lines and equipment with new digital technology delivering telephone calls to our volunteers via the internet. The upgrade is part of a Samaritans wide initiative being funded by Central Office and should result in better audio quality, fewer dropped calls and a more efficient IT support model.

We will continue to fundraise to complete the last major piece of renovation work at our branch replacing our 40+ year old entrance door with a more secure, draught free and energy efficient one.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Results for the Period

Income from all sources amounted to £37,041 while total expenditure was £43,966, which resulted in a deficit for the year of £6,955.

Financial Highlights

Reading Samaritans received kind and generous support from local businesses, groups and individuals in the period. These include R Bion Ltd, Ultima, Costain, the Gilbert and Eileen Edgar Foundation and Man the Lifeboats as well as a generous donation from St Laurence Church.

We also wish to extend our gratitude to all other local businesses and groups who continue to support us. These funds are crucial in enabling us to continue with the day to day running of the charity.

Our volunteers support us not just with their time but by their amazing fundraising efforts. These include sponsored sporting events and cake sales amongst others. Many volunteers also donated back monies due to them by way of travel expenses which allowed Reading Samaritans to claim a further £1.5K in Gift Aid.

Our current volunteers, previous volunteers and other members of the community participate in our monthly lottery called the 100 Club, which raised £3.1K in subscriptions in the period.

We are fortunate to be supported by Reading Borough Council (RBC) who provided support to assist us with the recruitment and training as well as National Samaritans Charity allowing us to continue our work with Huntercombe Prison.

With the continued reduced fundraising and awareness activities post Covid we have been fortunate in securing grants of £3K from the Berkshire Community Foundation, £2K from GWR and £3K from Earley Charity and £1k from Sykes Foundation.

Most of the expenditure in the period was incurred on centre running costs, centre facilities updates and ensuring we are properly insured for our activities. The additional grants received have also enabled us to refurbish the training building.

Reserves Policy

Reading Samaritans maintains unrestricted reserves:

- To provide a level of working capital that protects the continuity of our work;
- To provide a level of funding for unexpected opportunities; and
- To provide cover for risks such as unforeseen expenditure or unanticipated loss of income.

Reading Samaritans' Trustees are responsible for determining the appropriate level of reserves for the branch to hold. The current policy is to hold reserves equivalent to 18 months expenditure which is both the reserves level the Trustee Board determine appropriate and also the expectation of the National Samaritans Charity.

Unrestricted reserves held at 31st March 2023 were 16.0 months or £58,200 which is a little below policy driven by some one off investments in the centre during the year. We did not realise the predicted budget deficit as we were able to gain additional funding by way of above mentioned grants and support by groups

Restricted Funds are designated separately and are used in accordance with agreements between Reading Samaritans and the relevant fund providers such as the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) and RBC. At 31st March 2023, there was £3,850 of restricted funds.

Reserves are held in current or accessible savings accounts to ensure the branch activities can operate smoothly.

Financial Policies and Control

Reading Samaritans has a detailed financial policy framework, reviewed and approved by the external charity oversight organisation Reading Voluntary Action.

The branch accounts comply with statutory requirements and with the branch constitution.

The Trustees believe the existing controls are adequate to safeguard the assets of the charity.

Payments to Trustees

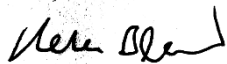
No remuneration was paid to any of the Trustees. Where appropriate, Trustees have been reimbursed for expenses incurred in performing their duties as a Listener, in their Management/Support Volunteer roles or as a Trustee. As with all expenses, these are reviewed and approved by at least 2 signatories. Under no circumstances does the Trustee claiming expenses approve their own expenses.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUSTEES

The trustees are responsible for preparing the annual report and financial statements in accordance with Charity Commission guidelines. The annual report and financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Charity Commission guidelines. These financial statements have been reviewed and approved by an independent examiner.

The trustees are responsible for keeping sufficient accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time, the financial position of the charity. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

By order of the Trustees



Helen Blanchard Director and Chair of the Trustee Board [since September 2023]

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS**Registered Name**

Reading Samaritans is a registered charity, with charity registration number 1170632.

Registered and Operational Address

59a Cholmeley Road
Reading, Berkshire
RG1 3NB

The Trustees**Current Trustees**

Ester May	<i>Director and Chair</i>
Helen Blanchard	<i>Deputy Director</i>
Hetal Patel	<i>Secretary</i>
Elizabeth Hayes	
Justin Bedingfeld	<i>Treasurer</i>
Dave Calver	
Darren Jones	
Joanna Hayes	
Angelina Lewis	
Sophie Mcbean	<i>appointed October 2022</i>
Sarah Bowsher	<i>appointed October 2022</i>

Previous Trustees

Stephen Sheath	<i>resigned October 2022</i>
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INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of the Reading Samaritans on the accounts for the year ending 31 March 2023

Responsibilities and basis of report

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity ("the Trust") on pages 11 to 17 for the year ended 31 March 2023.

As the charity trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records
- the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

 Date 2 October 2023

Christine Holland CPFA
9 Ellerton Close
Theale
Reading RG7 5QN

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNTS

Receipts and payments

	<i>Note</i>	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds Year Ended 31 March 2023	Last Year
		£	£	£	£
Receipts					
Donations	2	4,285	-	4,285	7,145
Revenue Grants	3	1,561	15,531	17,092	16,759
Fundraising	4	15,492	-	15,492	22,973
Bank and Building Society Interest	5	172	-	172	39
Total receipts		21,510	15,531	37,041	46,916
Payments					
Direct and Charitable Expenditure	6	26,706	13,325	40,031	41,938
Fundraising Costs	7	2,542	-	2,542	1,957
Management and Administration	8	295	-	295	285
Contribution to Central Charity	9	1,128	-	1,128	-
Total payments		30,671	13,325	43,996	44,180
Net of receipts / (payments)		-9,161	2,206	-6,955	2,736
Cash funds last year					
		67,442	1,645	69,087	66,351
Cash funds this year		58,282	3,850	62,132	69,087

Statement of assets and liabilities as at 31 March 2023

	<i>Note</i>	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds Year Ended 31 March 2023	Last Year
		£	£	£	£
Cash funds					
Coop Current Account		4,266	3,850	8,116	16,739
HSBC Deposit Account		2,547	-	2,547	1,044
Virgin Money Deposit Account		51,469	-	51,469	51,304
Total cash funds		58,282	3,850	62,132	69,087

NOTES TO THE RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNTS

(1) Accounting Policies

Basis for Accounts Preparation

The accounts have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis in accordance with Charity Commission guidance.

Income

All income is accounted for when received. Income is allocated by category to enable analysis of income sources at any time.

Expenditure

Expenditure is accounted for when it is paid and is classified under headings that aggregate costs to a category. Expenditure includes VAT which cannot be recovered.

Expenditure is broken down into four categories:

- Direct and Charitable Expenditure
- Fundraising Costs;
- Management and Administration; and
- Contribution to Central Charity.

There are notes to the accounts showing what is included in each of these categories.

Tangible Fixed Assets

All tangible fixed assets have been expensed. However, all items that cost more than £1,000 are listed on an asset register.

Funds

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objects at the discretion of the Trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for certain activities as specified by the donor or the fundraising process. Relevant expenditure is categorised against each fund.

Details of Receipts**(2) Donations**

Donations	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds Year Ended 31 March 2023	Last Year
	£	£	£	£
Individuals	601	-	601	1,020
Churches	1,000	-	1,000	3,161
Groups in the Community	620	-	620	1,500
Gift Aid	1,562	-	1,562	1,409
Bequests	0	-	0	55
Street Collections	502	-	502	
Total	4,285	-	4,285	7,145

(3) Revenue Grants

Revenue Grants	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds Year Ended 31 March 2023	Last Year
	£	£	£	£
National Offender Management Service	1,561	318	1,879	3,512
Reading Borough Council	-	6,013	6,013	-
Sykes	-	1,000	1,000	-
Reading Community	-	250	250	-
Earley Charity	-	3,000	3,000	
Berkshire Community Foundation	-	2,800	2,800	3,000
Pears Grant	-	-	-	3,097
GWR SCC Grant	-	2,150	2,150	2,150
DHSC Grant	-	-	-	5,000
Total	1,561	15,531	17,092	16,759

(4) Fundraising

Fundraising	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds Year Ended 31 March 2023	Last Year
	£	£	£	£
Business and Corporate Fundraising	5,349	-	5,349	15,654
100 Club	3,068	-	3,068	3,146
Volunteer Initiated Fundraising	579	-	579	759
Witt Morgan Concerts	529	-	529	53
Sam Jam Sales	-	-	-	128
FIT Payments	650	-	650	595
Festival Branch Store Rental	500	-	500	500
Sarah Millican	2,005	-	2,005	-
Easy Fundraising, Amazon Smile etc	2,587	-	2,587	1,972
Other	225	-	225	166
Total	15,492	-	15,492	22,973

(5) Bank and Building Society Interest

Bank and Building Society Interest	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds Year Ended 31 March 2023	Last Year
	£	£	£	£
HSBC	2	-	2	0
Virgin	170	-	170	39
Total	172	-	172	39

Details of Expenditure

(6) Direct and Charitable Expenditure

Direct and Charitable Expenditure	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds Year Ended 31 March 2023 £	Last Year £
Fabric of the Centre	10,788	-	10,788	5,898
Maintenance Contracts	3,807	-	3,807	3,055
Utilities	3,989	-	3,999	5,479
Housekeeping	2,912	-	2,912	2,165
Equipping the Centre	2,114	-	2,114	5,159
Volunteer Expenses	465	-	465	382
Conference/Meeting Fees	10	-	10	-
Outreach	101	-	101	1,368
Committee Hospitality and Other Costs	22	-	22	71
Volunteer Recognition and Retention	2,498	-	2,498	2,184
Gift aiding of expenses	-	-	-	-
Reading Borough Council	-	2,263	2,263	2,154
NOMS (see Restricted Expenditure Note)	-	1,777	1,777	951
Reading CIC	-	132	132	-
COOP Donation	-	-	-	429
Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust	-	-0	-0	-16
Postcode Lottery	-	0	0	252
Berkshire Community Foundation	-	2,800	2,800	3,000
Pears Grant	-	-	-	3,097
GWR SCC Grant		2,414	2,414	1,310
Sykes Foundation		690	690	
Reading Community		250	250	
Earley Charity		3,000	3,000	
DHSC Grant		-	-	5,000
Total	26,706	13,325	40,031	41,938

(7) Fundraising Costs

Fundraising Costs	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds Year Ended 31 March 2023	Last Year
	£	£	£	£
Raising Branch Income	647	-	647	187
100 Club	1,895	-	1,895	1,770
Gift Aiding of Expenses (Timing Difference)	-	-	-	-
Total	2,542	-	2,542	1,957

(8) Management and Administration

Management and Administration	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds Year Ended 31 March 2023	Last Year
	£	£	£	£
Phone Calls	-	-	-	30
Travel Claims	-	-	-	-
Stationery and Postage	-	-	-	8
Hospitality	-	-	-	-
Committee Member Expenses	-	-	-	48
Professional Fees	26	-	26	24
AGM and Annual Review	269	-	269	175
Total	295	-	295	285

(9) Contribution to Central Charity

Contribution to Central Charity	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds Year Ended 31 March 2023	Last Year
	£	£	£	£
Branch Contribution	1,128	-	1,128	-
Total	1,128	-	1,128	-

Changes to the calculation of the contribution to the Central Charity as a result of Covid 19 resulted in no payment being due for the previous year.

(10) Restricted Funds

Restricted Funds	1st April 2022	Income	Expenditure	31st March 2023
Reading Borough Council	-	6,012	2,263	3,749
National Offender Management Scheme (NOMS)	542	318	1,777	-917
Sykes Foundation	-	1,000	689	311
Reading CIC Grant	263	-	132	131
Reading Community	-	250	250	-
Earley Charity	-	3,000	3,000	-
Berkshire Community Foundation	-	2,800	2,800	-
Pears Grant	-			-
GWR SCC Grant	840	2,150	2,414	576
DHSC Grant	-	-	-	-
Total	1,645	15,530	13,325	3,850

Restricted funds include the following:

- Reading Borough Council grant for recruitment and training costs including printing, some electricity and cost of training sessions
- NOMS grant for our Huntercombe Prison support
- Sykes Donation for external training
- Reading CIC grant for outreach through Town Centre Arts
- Reading Community for lighting
- Berkshire Community Foundation grant to cover operational costs
- GWR grant to cover outreach events, materials and training of New Volunteers
- Earley Charity to upgrade doors in our Training Building

Accounts

READING SAMARITANS TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1 APRIL 2021 TO 31 MARCH 2022

Charity Registration Number: 1170632

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INTRODUCTION

Reading Samaritans is a charity based in Reading serving both the local area and wider community. It is a recognised branch of the national Samaritans Charity and, as one of around 200 branches, provides emotional support across the country.

The Reading Samaritans' trustees present their annual report and financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2022.

SAMARITANS VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

Samaritan's vision is that fewer people die by suicide. We work to achieve this vision by making it our mission to alleviate emotional distress and reduce the incidence of suicidal feelings and suicidal behaviour.

We are committed to the following values:

- Listening;
- Confidentiality;
- People making their own decision;
- Being non-judgemental; and
- Human contact.

CHARITY OBJECTIVES

The objectives of Reading Samaritans are:

- I) To enable persons in Reading and the surrounding area as well as elsewhere who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those who may be at risk of suicide, to receive confidential emotional support at any time of the day or night in order to improve their emotional health and to reduce the incidence of suicide;
- II) To promote a better understanding in society of suicide, suicidal behaviour and the value of expressing feelings which may otherwise lead to suicide or impaired emotional health; and
- III) To collaborate with and support Samaritans Central Charity and its affiliated branches in fulfilling these objectives.

CHARITY ACTIVITIES

The charity offers support to those who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those who may be at risk of suicide by being there to listen and encourage the recognition and exploration of their options. By doing so we aim to help people find ways of coping with their current feelings.

Reading Samaritans Outreach provides services to schools, higher education institutions, companies and at local events. We also work locally providing regular support in Huntercombe Prison and at local railway stations. We aim to increase awareness of our services in all sectors of the community by giving awareness talks, attending local public events and working with other organisations.

These activities are carried out by Reading Samaritans for the benefit of the local and wider community and with due regard of the guidance on public benefit published by the Charity Commission.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

While Reading Samaritans is a longstanding organisation in Reading, it was incorporated as a separate Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) on 8 December 2016.

Reading Samaritans is a recognised branch of Samaritans, with the national Samaritans Charity providing support services such as training materials and guidance. This relationship is governed by an Operating Agreement which ensures all branches adhere to the same required standards, while recognising that branches have their own leadership team and are responsible for fundraising and overall governance.

Reading Samaritans activities are wholly performed by our committed group of around 120 volunteers and we have no employees. The charity is managed by the leadership team, comprised of trustees and deputy directors. The branch Director, also a trustee, is responsible for the day to day management of the charity's activities including matters arising relating to callers and volunteers. The Director is supported in their role by a team of deputy directors who have specific roles and responsibilities.

The Trustee Board of trustees oversee the charity and have collective and ultimate responsibility for governing the charity and directing how it is managed and run. Trustees place a high priority on ensuring high standards of governance including management of risk assessment processes. Trustees are recruited from both within the charity and externally to ensure Reading Samaritans has a balanced and appropriately skilled Trustee Board. The trustee hiring process involves interviews and background checks. Following this, the Trustee Board must vote on the admission of new trustees. Members of Reading Samaritans also vote whether to re-elect each trustee at the Annual General Meeting. New trustees are provided with an initial information pack and are required to complete online training designed by the national Samaritans Charity.

Full leadership team meetings are held at least every 3 months, with separate Trustee Board and deputy director meetings held in the intervening months. Decisions are taken at meetings where trustees are present, with a simple majority of trustees required for decisions to be passed. Additional meetings are

held when required and decisions can be made outside of these meetings if needed.

ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Support Provided

Reading Samaritans volunteers continue to provide vital support to callers. Numbers are slightly down on the previous year, however the volume of calls we are dealing with is higher than pre-COVID 19 call volumes.

- 17,048 telephone calls (down from 18,009)
- 5,319 emails (up from 5,305)
- 0 text messages (service no longer offered)
- 0 face to face visits (service suspended under COVID 19 working practices)

Key Developments

The year was again significantly impacted by COVID 19 and the impact this has had on volunteer availability, number of calls and callers themselves. This made planning, training and Outreach difficult, particularly with changes in COVID 19 restrictions.

Volunteers were able to continue using 'Key worker' status to enable travel for listening and support volunteer shifts and were more comfortable coming into the branch overall. During the year, there was a shift back to relative normality which created difficulties in filling listening shifts. This was primarily because more volunteers were busy with events and holidays, which we expect will reduce back to pre- COVID 19 levels. We continue to monitor shift coverage and have taken steps to improve our long-term coverage.

We again had 3 cohorts of volunteers complete the initial training programme to become a Samaritans listening volunteer and volunteer applications continue to be strong. There was renewed focus on Continuous Development this year, with mandatory safeguarding modules for all Samaritans alongside a wide range of training developed by the Reading Samaritans training team.

The Reading Samaritans Branch Director, Alison Chapman, completed their 3 year position in September 2021. The new Branch Director, Ester May, received onboarding training from Alison and chaired the Annual General Meeting in November 2021. Given the change in Director, the Samaritans central office conducted their standard branch review which Reading Samaritans embraced and received a great outcome.

Community Outreach Programme

Reading Samaritans worked with a hybrid Outreach approach for much of the year, dealing with both face-to-face events and video conferencing to support vulnerable groups in the local community. We made use of existing partnerships with Royal Berkshire Hospital, a charity supporting veterans, local schools and Reading University. We also delivered listening skills workshops to local companies looking to support their employees, using connections built up from previous years.

One area of focus this year was partnerships with two local Rugby clubs to raise awareness of the work of Samaritans, particularly when supporting men. We will look to develop these relationships into future years so that Reading Samaritans can continue to support this group.

Two large face-to-face events this year were Reading Pride and a community event at Reading Town Hall. Reading Pride is one of our regular Outreach events to support the LGBTQ+ community and the stand was very well attended. We also held a community event in Reading for anyone to come along and learn about the work of Samaritans.

Branch Improvements

The continued success of grant applications during the year allowed us to complete more renovation work than we had originally budgeted for. Many areas have not been decorated in over 25 years, so we focused our efforts to redecorate, recarpet, improve lighting and replace worn furniture.

The redecoration of the operations room, debrief room and kitchen within the main building has greatly improved the experience for volunteers. There were also upgrades to IT including a new office desktop, training laptop and projector.

We also undertook an exercise to declutter the branch, to organise cupboard contents, better utilise noticeboards and dispose of old furniture. Much of the furniture was donated to individuals, which meant that minimal waste entered landfill sites.

FUTURE PLANS

The priority of Reading Samaritans is to move forward in a safe way that ensures all volunteers are comfortable. We are now conducting face-to-face training, attending Outreach events and organising social activities to engage both volunteers and the local community.

We will continue to operate a hybrid model to deliver Outreach activities, as this has proved effective in reaching a wider audience. The focus will be a visible face-to-face presence wherever possible, with video conferences to ensure that we deliver services to more vulnerable groups.

Upcoming plans for the branch are focused on making improvements to the training centre, called Friends House. We have budgeted for renovation of the toilet facilities, entrance area and the replacement of windows.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Results for the period

Income from all sources amounted to £46,916 while total expenditure was £44,180, which resulted in a surplus for the year of £2,736.

Financial Highlights

Reading Samaritans received generous support from local businesses, groups and individuals in the period, particularly given the ongoing impact from COVID 19. These include R Bion Ltd, Hayes Clifford, Crowe LLP, Arnold Clark, the Gilbert and Eileen Edgar Foundation, Savilles, Grundon ASDA and Waitrose as well as generation donation from Churches – St Marys, St Laurence, St James and St Williams and Stoke Row Chapel.

We also wish to extend our gratitude to all other local businesses and groups who continue to support us. These funds are crucial in enabling us to continue with running of the charity.

Reading Samaritans received financial support by Reading Borough Council in the period who provided support to assist us with recruitment and training. We were fortunate in securing grants from Berkshire Community Foundation, Pears Foundation, GWR and the Department of Health and Social Care.

Our volunteers support us not just with their time but by their amazing fundraising efforts. These include sponsored sporting events and cake sales amongst others. Many volunteers donated back monies due to them by way of travel expenses which allowed Reading Samaritans to claim Gift Aid. Our current volunteers, previous volunteers and other members of the community also participate in our monthly lottery called the 100 Club, which raised significant funds for the charity.

Most of the expenditure in the period was incurred on centre running costs, IT facilities and ensuring we are properly insured for our activities. The additional grants received also enabled us to continue the centre refurbishment, to create a nice environment for the charity's volunteers.

Reserves Policy

Reading Samaritans maintains unrestricted reserves:

- To provide a level of working capital that protects the continuity of our work;
- To provide a level of funding for unexpected opportunities; and
- To provide cover for risks such as unforeseen expenditure or unanticipated loss of income.

Reading Samaritans' Trustees are responsible for determining the appropriate level of reserves for the branch to hold. Our policy is to hold reserves equivalent to 18 months expenditure which is both the reserves level the Trustee Board determine appropriate plus the expectation of the national Samaritans Charity.

Unrestricted reserves held at 31 March 2022 were 17.9 months (£67,442) and in line with the Reading Samaritans policy. The additional grants which were not in

the Annual Budget allowed the charity to carry out the refurbishments without eroding the unrestricted reserves.

Restricted Funds are designated separately and are used in accordance with agreements between Reading Samaritans and the relevant fund providers such as the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) and GWR. At 31 March 2022, there were £1,645 of restricted funds.

Reserves are held in current or accessible savings accounts to ensure the branch activities can operate smoothly.

Financial Policies and Control

Reading Samaritans has a detailed financial policy framework, reviewed and approved by the external charity oversight organisation Reading Voluntary Action.

The Branch Accounts comply with statutory requirements and with the branch constitution.

The Trustees believe the existing controls are adequate to safeguard the assets of the charity.

Payments to Trustees

No remuneration was paid to any of the Trustees. Where appropriate, Trustees have been reimbursed for expenses incurred in performing their duties as a Listener, in their Management/Support Volunteer roles or as a Trustee. As with all expenses, these are reviewed and approved by at least 2 signatories. Under no circumstances does the Trustee claiming expenses approve their own expenses.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUSTEES

The trustees are responsible for preparing the annual report and financial statements in accordance with Charity Commission guidelines. The annual report and financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Charity Commission guidelines. These financial statements have been reviewed and approved by an independent examiner.

The trustees are responsible for keeping sufficient accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time, the financial position of the charity. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

By order of the Trustees

Ester May Director and Chair of the Trustee Board

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered Name

Reading Samaritans is a registered charity, with charity registration number 1170632.

Registered and Operational Address

59a Cholmeley Road
Reading, Berkshire
RG1 3NB

The Trustees

Current Trustees

Ester May	<i>Director and Chair</i>	<i>appointed September 2021</i>
Helen Blanchard	<i>Deputy Director</i>	<i>appointed September 2021</i>
Hetal Patel	<i>Secretary</i>	<i>appointed November 2021</i>
Elizabeth Hayes		<i>appointed January 2022</i>
Justin Bedingfeld	<i>Treasurer</i>	
Stephen Sheath		
Dave Calver		
Darren Jones		
Joanna Hayes		
Angelina Lewis		

Previous Trustees

Kathryn Wilkinson	<i>Treasurer</i>	<i>resigned April 2021</i>
Lisa Davies	<i>Secretary</i>	<i>resigned August 2021</i>

Alison Chapman *Director and Chair*
Ben Ralston

resigned September 2021
resigned November 2021

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of the Reading Samaritans on the accounts for the year ending 31 March 2022

Responsibilities and basis of report

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity ("the Trust") on pages 11 to 17 for the year ended 31 March 2022.

As the charity trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5) (b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records
- the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

----- Date

Christine Holland CPFA
9 Ellerton Close
Theale

Reading RG7 5QN

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNTS**Receipts and payments**

	Not e	Unrestric ted Funds	Restrict ed Funds	Total Funds Year Ended 31 March 2022	Last Year
		£	£	£	£
Receipts					
Donations	2	7,145	-	7,145	9,375
Revenue Grants	3	2,426	14,333	16,759	26,517
Fundraising	4	22,973	-	22,973	23,294
Bank and Building Society Interest	5	39	-	39	231
Total receipts		32,583	14,333	46,916	59,417
Payments					
Direct and Charitable Expenditure	6	25,761	16,177	41,938	43,324
Fundraising Costs	7	1,957	-	1,957	2,426
Management and Administration	8	285	-	285	152
Contribution to Central Charity	9	-	-	-	-
Total payments		28,003	16,177	44,180	45,902
Net of receipts / (payments)		4,580	(1,844)	2,736	13,515
Cash funds last year		62,862	3,489	66,351	52,836
Cash funds this year		67,442	1,645	69,087	66,351

Statement of assets and liabilities as at 31 March 2022

	Not e	Unrestric ted Funds	Restrict ed Funds	Total Funds Year Ended 31 March 2022	Last Year
		£	£	£	£
Cash funds					

Coop Current Account	15,094	1,645	16,739	8,072
HSBC Deposit Account	1,044	-	1,044	7,013
Virgin Money Deposit Account	51,304	-	51,304	51,266
Total cash funds	67,442	1,645	69,087	66,351

NOTES TO THE RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNTS

(1) Accounting Policies

Basis for accounts preparation

The accounts have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis in accordance with Charity Commission guidance.

Income

All income is accounted for when received. Income is allocated by category to enable analysis of income sources at any time.

Expenditure

Expenditure is accounted for when it is paid and is classified under headings that aggregate costs to a category. Expenditure includes VAT which cannot be recovered.

Expenditure is broken down into four categories:

- Direct and Charitable Expenditure;
- Fundraising Costs;
- Management and Administration; and
- Contribution to Central Charity.

There are notes to the accounts showing what is included in each of these categories.

Tangible Fixed Assets

All tangible fixed assets have been expensed. However, all items that cost more than £1,000 are listed on an asset register.

Funds

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objects at the discretion of the Trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for certain activities as specified by the donor or the fundraising process. Relevant expenditure is categorised against each fund.

Details of Receipts**(2) Donations**

Donations	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds Year Ended 31 March 2022	Last Year
	£	£	£	£
Individuals	1,020	-	1,020	2,399
Churches	3,161	-	3,161	100
Groups in the Community	1,500	-	1,500	3,552
Gift Aid	1,408	-	1,408	1,219
Bequests	55	-	55	2,105
Street Collections	-	-	-	-
Total	7,145	-	7,145	9,748

(3) Revenue Grants

Revenue Grants	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds Year Ended 31 March 2022	Last Year
	£	£	£	£
National Offender Management Service	2,426	1,086	3,512	2,102
Reading Borough Council	-	-	-	4,050
Berkshire HealthCare NHS Foundation Trust	-	-	-	1,530
Postcode Lottery	-	-	-	3,000
Berkshire Community Foundation	-	3,000	3,000	3,000
Pears Grant	-	3,097	3,097	12,835
GWR SCC Grant	-	2,150	2,150	-
DHSC Grant	-	5,000	5,000	-

Total	2,426	14,333	16,759	26,517
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(4) Fundraising

Fundraising	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds Year Ended 31 March 2022 £	Last Year £
Business and Corporate Fundraising	15,654	-	15,654	6,983
100 Club	3,146	-	3,146	3,562
Volunteer Initiated Fundraising	759	-	759	2,482
Witt Morgan Concerts	53	-	53	5,288
Sam Jam Sales	128	-	128	1,131
FIT Payments	595	-	595	621
Festival Branch Store Rental	500	-	500	500
National raffle	-	-	-	190
Easy Fundraising, Amazon Smile etc	1,972	-	1,972	2,276
Other	166	-	166	261
Total	22,973	-	22,973	23,294

(5) Bank and Building Society Interest

Bank and Building Society Interest	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds Year Ended 31 March 2022 £	Last Year £
HSBC	0	-	0	1
Virgin	38	-	38	230
Total	39	-	39	231

Details of Expenditure**(6) Direct and Charitable Expenditure**

Direct and Charitable Expenditure	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds Year Ended 31 March 2022 £	Last Year £
Fabric of the Centre	5,898	-	5,898	5,686
Maintenance	3,055	-	3,055	2,455
Utilities	5,479	-	5,479	3,728
Housekeeping	2,165	-	2,165	2,429
Equipping Centre	5,159	-	5,159	2,045
Volunteer Expenses	382	-	382	442
Conference/Meeting	-	-	-	-
Outreach	1,368	-	1,368	3,244
Committee and Other Costs	71	-	71	20
Volunteer Recognition	2,184	-	2,184	-
Gift aiding of expenses	-	-	-	-
RBC (see Restricted Expenditure Note)	-	2,154	2,154	1,895
NOMS (see Restricted Expenditure Note)	-	951	951	517
The Field Seymour Parkes Foundation	-	-	-	1,000
COOP Donation	-	429	429	
Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust	-	-16	-16	1,291
Postcode Lottery	-	252	252	2,738
Berkshire Community Foundation	-	3,000	3,000	3,000
Pears Grant	-	3,097	3,097	12,835
GWR SCC Grant		1,310	1,310	
DHSC Grant		5,000	5,000	
Total	20,048	23,276	41,938	43,324

Fundraising Costs

Fundraising Costs	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds Year Ended 31 March 2022	Last Year
	£	£	£	£
Raising Branch Income	187	-	187	306
100 Club	1,770	-	1,770	2,120
Gift Aiding of Expenses (Timing Difference)	-	-	-	-
Total	1,957	-	1,957	2,426

(7) Management and Administration

Management and Administration	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds Year Ended 31 March 2022	Last Year
	£	£	£	£
Phone Calls	30	-	30	120
Travel Claims	-	-	-	-
Stationery and Postage	8	-	8	8
Hospitality	-	-	-	-
Committee Member Expenses	48	-	48	-
Professional Fees	24	-	24	24
AGM and Annual Review	176	-	176	-
Total	285	-	285	152

(8) Contribution to Central Charity

Contribution to Central Charity	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds Year Ended 31 March 2022	Last Year
	£	£	£	£
Branch Contribution	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	-

Changes to the calculation of the required contribution to the Central Charity as a result of COVID 19 have resulted in no payment being due for the current year.

(9) Restricted Funds

Restricted Funds	1 April 2021	Income	Expenditure	31 March 2022
Reading Borough Council	2,155	-	2,155	0
National Offender Management Scheme (NOMS)	407	1,086	951	542
Coop Donation	429	-	429	0
Reading CIC Grant	262	-	-	262
Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust	-16	-	-16	0
Postcode Lottery	252	-	252	0
Berkshire Community Foundation	-	3,000	3,000	-
Pears Grant	-	3,097	3,097	-
GWR SCC Grant	-	2,150	1,310	840
DHSC Grant	-	5,000	5,000	-
Total	3,489	14,333	16,177	1,645

Restricted funds include the following:

- Reading Borough Council Grant for recruitment and training costs including printing, some electricity and cost of training sessions;
- NOMS grant for our Huntercombe Prison support;
- Coop donation received for publicity and outreach materials and fees;
- Reading CIC grant for outreach through Town Centre Arts;
- Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust to provide software development and materials to support referrals from the NHS;
- Postcode Lottery grant to cover operational costs;
- Berkshire Community Foundation grant to cover operational costs;
- Pears Grant via Central Office to cover COVID 19 related costs / improvements;
- GWR Grant to cover Outreach Events, Materials and Training if New Volunteers; and
- DHSC Grant to support building Refurbishment of training rooms.

Accounts

READING SAMARITANS TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1 APRIL 2020 TO 31 MARCH 2021

Charity Registration Number: 1170632

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INTRODUCTION

Reading Samaritans is a charity based in Reading serving both the local area and wider community. It is a recognised branch of the national Samaritans Charity and, as one of over 200 branches, provides emotional support across the country.

The Reading Samaritans' trustees present their annual report and financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2021.

SAMARITANS VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

Samaritan's vision is that fewer people die by suicide. We work to achieve this vision by making it our mission to alleviate emotional distress and reduce the incidence of suicidal feelings and suicidal behaviour.

We are committed to the following values:

- Listening;
- Confidentiality;
- People making their own decision;
- Being non-judgemental; and
- Human contact.

CHARITY OBJECTIVES

The objectives of Reading Samaritans are:

- I) To enable persons in Reading and the surrounding area as well as elsewhere who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those who may be at risk of suicide, to receive confidential emotional support at any time of the day or night in order to improve their emotional health and to reduce the incidence of suicide;
- II) To promote a better understanding in society of suicide, suicidal behaviour and the value of expressing feelings which may otherwise lead to suicide or impaired emotional health; and
- III) To collaborate with and support Samaritans Central Charity and its affiliated branches in fulfilling these objectives.

CHARITY ACTIVITIES

The charity offers support to those who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those who may be at risk of suicide by being there to listen and encourage the recognition and exploration of their options. By doing so we aim to help people find ways of coping with their current feelings.

Reading Samaritans Outreach provides services to schools, higher education institutions, companies and at local events. We also work locally providing

regular support in Huntercombe Prison and at local railway stations. We aim to increase awareness of our services in all sectors of the community by giving awareness talks, attending local public events and working with other organisations.

These activities are carried out by Reading Samaritans for the benefit of the local and wider community and with due regard of the guidance on public benefit published by the Charity Commission.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

While Reading Samaritans is a longstanding organisation in Reading, it was incorporated as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) on 8 December 2016.

Reading Samaritans is a recognised branch of Samaritans, with the national Samaritans Charity providing support services such as training materials and guidance. This relationship is governed by an Operating Agreement which ensures that all branches adhere to the same required standards, while recognising that branches have their own leadership team and are responsible for fundraising.

Reading Samaritans activities are wholly performed by our committed group of around 140 volunteers and we have no employees. The charity is managed by the leadership team, comprised of trustees and deputy directors. The branch Director, also a trustee, is responsible for the day to day management of the charity's activities including matters arising relating to callers and volunteers. The Director is supported in their role by a team of deputy directors who have specific roles and responsibilities. The Trustee Board oversee the charity and have collective and ultimate responsibility for governing the charity and directing how it is managed and run.

Trustees place a high priority on ensuring high standards of governance including management of risk assessment processes. Full leadership team meetings are held at least every 3 months, with separate Trustee Board and deputy director meetings held in the intervening months. Decisions are taken at meetings where trustees are present, with a simple majority of trustees required for decisions to be passed. Additional meetings are held when required and decisions can be made outside of these meetings if needed.

Trustees are recruited from both within the charity and externally to ensure Reading Samaritans has a balanced and appropriately skilled Trustee Board. The trustee hiring process involves interviews and background checks. Following this, the Trustee Board must vote on the admission of new trustees. Members of Reading Samaritans also vote whether to re-elect each trustee at the Annual General Meeting. New trustees are provided with an initial information pack and are required to complete online training designed by the national Samaritans Charity.

ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Support Provided

Reading Samaritans volunteers continue to provide vital support to callers and the last year has been particularly successful in the number of calls and emails:

- 18,009 telephone calls (up from 15,772; +14%)
- 5,319 emails (up from 4,613; +15%)
- 0 text messages (service no longer offered)
- 0 face to face visits (service suspended under COVID 19 working practices)

Key Developments

Our year has been dominated by the COVID 19 pandemic and the impact this has had on volunteer availability, number of calls and callers themselves. In April 2020, Samaritans were given 'Key worker' status, which enabled volunteers to legitimately contravene lockdown restrictions to travel for listening and support volunteer shifts.

Whilst several of our volunteers needed to self-isolate, many volunteers increased their number of shifts. This helped provide a consistent service across Samaritans and ensure the greater number of incoming calls and emails were answered. As a branch, we updated our processes and safety procedures to comply with social distancing requirements and increased cleaning frequency to reduce risks for volunteers.

From April 2020, the Reading Samaritans training team embraced the twin challenge of delivering new training materials for Samaritans Initial Training and delivering training online. The training team successfully trained 23 volunteers through Samaritans Initial Training during the year. Of these volunteers, 13 have now completed the mentoring phase of their training.

We held our first ever online Annual General Meeting in November 2020. Whilst the experience didn't allow for the usual face-to-face catch ups, it was well attended by members and a massive success.

As a result of COVID 19, our dedicated team of prison volunteers had to temporarily cease their amazing listening training work with prisoners at Huntercombe Prison. This is a vital service in reducing suicide in prison and we have now been given the green light to return to Huntercombe Prison to recommence this training.

In addition, the pandemic and cessation of rugby matches meant our partnership with three rugby clubs in Reading was put on hold. Once restrictions are lifted, we'll be able to install post protectors and highlight the support Samaritans can offer to a vulnerable demographic.

Many traditional fundraising activities were not possible this year due to the COVID 19 pandemic. We therefore applied for and were successful in grant applications from the People's Postcode Lottery, Pears Foundation and Berkshire

Community Foundation. These allowed us to continue the much-needed redecoration of the branch whilst maintaining an acceptable level of reserves.

Community Outreach Programme

The last year required a shift in how Outreach activities were delivered, with a move to engagement through video conferencing to maintain links within the community. Throughout the year we worked with organisations to help support those they care for, such as local NHS groups including Royal Berkshire Hospital, and companies who are looking to better support their employees.

We also provided support to local charities dealing with the homeless during the year, as well as support to a charity supporting veterans. We continue to work with these groups and local schools, Reading University and youth groups such as Guides and Scouts.

Branch Improvements

The successful grant applications during the year allowed us to continue with the branch redecoration. Many areas had not been decorated in over 25 years, so we focused our efforts to redecorate, recarpet, improve lighting and replace worn furniture in much of the branch.

The most sizeable improvement made during the year was the replacement of the old and draughty aluminium windows. We installed modern uPVC windows which greatly enhanced the building's security and energy efficiency properties.

We replaced all internal phone wiring, telephones and wireless headsets which resulted in noticeably better audio quality for callers and volunteers. A further IT improvement was a broadband upgrade, which increased internet speeds by ten times.

FUTURE PLANS

At the time of writing, COVID 19 restrictions are starting to lift across the UK, however it has been difficult to plan events and outreach awareness work early in the year due to the uncertainty. We hope that by summer 2021, we can start face-to-face Outreach awareness activities and fundraising in a COVID 19 safe manner.

May 2021 sees a new Recruitment and Selection 'Branch Management Tool' rolled out across Samaritans. This tool will automate the process of a potential volunteer applying, having an interview, being selected for training and being assigned a place on an upcoming course. We are expecting that the introduction of the new tool will create a smoother experience for potential volunteers and be much less labour intensive for the branches.

We will also soon be training our Listening Volunteers in a new service of 'Online Chat', a new model for Samaritans, but a communication tool which is popular

particularly with younger callers and will further increase Samaritans reach to anyone who may need to talk.

We have agreed advertising on petrol pumps at three local supermarkets for a month in August, to raise awareness of Samaritans. These typically reach 48,000 people per station a month, so a great way of getting our name out there.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Results for the period

Income from all sources amounted to £59,417 while total expenditure was £45,902, which resulted in a surplus for the year of £13,515.

Financial Highlights

Reading Samaritans received generous support from local businesses, groups and individuals in the year, who have gone to great lengths in supporting the charity. These include the Witt Morgan Choir, R Bion Ltd, the Catenians, Millgate Homes, the Gilbert and Eileen Edgar Foundation, and a legacy in memory of Roderick Standing.

We also wish to extend our gratitude to other local businesses and groups who continue to support us. These funds are crucial in enabling us to continue with the day to day running of the charity.

Our volunteers support us not just with their time but by their amazing fundraising efforts. These include sponsored sporting events and making jams in aid of Reading Samaritans. The making of jam this year raised over £1,100. Our current volunteers, previous volunteers and other members of the community participate in our monthly lottery called the 100 Club, which raised £3,562 in subscriptions in the period. Many volunteers also donated back monies due to them by way of travel expenses which allowed Reading Samaritans to claim a further £1,218 in Gift Aid.

We are fortunate to be supported by Reading Borough Council, who provided £4,050 to assist us with the recruitment and training of new volunteers. Furthermore, support from the national Samaritans Charity allows us to continue our work with Huntercombe Prison.

At the start of the year, income sources were uncertain and we have been fortunate in securing grants of £3,000 each from the Postcode Lottery and the Berkshire Community Foundation as well as a grant of £12,835 from the Pears Foundation through the national Samaritans charity.

Most of the expenditure in the period was incurred on centre running costs, IT facilities and ensuring we are properly insured for our activities. We incurred additional expenses providing the deeper cleaning, cleaning materials and sanitiser required to ensure our volunteers remained safe while at the Centre. The additional grants received enabled us to further refurbish the centre, replacing the windows, replacing furniture in the reception area and our face-to-face meeting rooms and undertaking necessary electrical improvements and redecoration.

Reserves Policy

Reading Samaritans maintains unrestricted reserves:

- To provide a level of working capital that protects the continuity of our work;
- To provide a level of funding for unexpected opportunities; and
- To provide cover for risks such as unforeseen expenditure or unanticipated loss of income.

Reading Samaritans' Trustees are responsible for determining the appropriate level of reserves for the branch to hold. The current policy is to hold reserves equivalent to 18 months expenditure which is both the reserves level the Trustee Board determine appropriate and also the expectation of the national Samaritans Charity.

Unrestricted reserves held at 31st March 2021 were less than 18 months, at £62,862. However, the Trustee Board considers that the current level of unrestricted reserves is deemed appropriate. We did not realise the predicted budget deficit as we were able to gain additional funding by way of several grants and additional support from individuals, groups and businesses in the community during the pandemic. Further, reserves are calculated on the latest annual expenditure. Current year expenditure is higher than normal resulting in the months in reserve being lower.

Restricted Funds are designated separately and are used in accordance with agreements between Reading Samaritans and the fund providers such as the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) and Reading Borough Council. At 31 March 2021, there were £3,489 of restricted funds. £2,025 of this is the payment received on 31 March 2021 in accordance with the Service Level Agreement held with Reading Borough Council to support training and recruitment for the period from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

Reserves are held in current or accessible savings accounts to ensure the branch activities can operate smoothly.

Financial Policies and Control

Reading Samaritans has a detailed financial policy framework, reviewed and approved by the external charity oversight organisation Reading Voluntary Action.

The Branch Accounts comply with statutory requirements and with the branch constitution.

The Trustees believe the existing controls are adequate to safeguard the assets of the charity.

Payments to Trustees

No remuneration was paid to any of the Trustees. Where appropriate, Trustees have been reimbursed for expenses incurred in performing their duties as a Listening Volunteer, in their Management/Support Volunteer roles or as a Trustee. As with all expenses, these are reviewed and approved by at least 2 signatories.

Under no circumstances does the Trustee claiming expenses approve their own expenses.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUSTEES

The trustees are responsible for preparing the annual report and financial statements in accordance with Charity Commission guidelines.

The annual report and financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Charity Commission guidelines. These financial statements have been reviewed and approved by an independent examiner.

The trustees are responsible for keeping sufficient accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time, the financial position of the charity. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

By order of the Trustees

Alison Chapman Director and Chair of the Trustee Board

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered Name

Reading Samaritans is a registered charity, with charity registration number 1170632.

Registered and Operational Address

59a Cholmeley Road
Reading, Berkshire
RG1 3NB

The Trustees

Alison Chapman *Director and Chair*

Kathryn Wilkinson *Treasurer*

Lisa Davies *Secretary*

Stephen Sheath

Dave Calver

Ben Ralston

Darren Jones

Joanna Hayes

Angelina Lewis

Justin Bedingfeld

Martin Richmond

Ester May

Chris Uden

appointed November 2020

appointed November 2020

appointed February 2021

resigned November 2020

resigned November 2020

resigned November 2020

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of the Reading Samaritans on the accounts for the year ending 31 March 2021

Responsibilities and basis of report

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity ("the Trust") on pages 12 to 18 for the year ended 31 March 2021.

As the charity trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5) (b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records
- the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

----- Date

Christine Holland CPFA
9 Ellerton Close
Theale
Reading RG7 5QN

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNTS**Receipts and payments**

	<i>Not e</i>	Unrestric ted Funds £	Restrict ed Funds £	Total Funds Year Ended 31 March 2021 £	Last Year £
Receipts					
Donations	2	9,375	-	9,375	9,748
Revenue Grants	3	1,569	24,948	26,517	4,572
Fundraising	4	23,294	-	23,294	17,242
Bank and Building Society Interest	5	231	-	231	331
Total receipts		34,469	24,948	59,417	31,893
Payments					
Direct and Charitable Expenditure	6	20,048	23,276	43,324	29,459
Fundraising Costs	7	2,426	-	2,426	2,451
Management and Administration	8	142	10	152	581
Contribution to Central Charity	9	-	-	-	619
Total payments		22,616	23,286	45,902	33,110
Net of receipts / (payments)		11,853	1,662	13,515	(1,217)
Cash funds last year		51,009	1,827	52,836	54,053
Cash funds this year		62,862	3,489	66,351	52,836

Statement of assets and liabilities as at 31 March 2021

	<i>Not e</i>	Unrestric ted Funds £	Restrict ed Funds £	Total Funds Year Ended 31 March 2021 £	Last Year £
Cash funds					
Coop Current Account		4,583	3,489	8,072	2,262
HSBC Deposit Account		7,013	-	7,013	1,539

Virgin Money Deposit Account	51,266	-	51,266	49,035
Total cash funds	62,862	3,489	66,351	52,836

NOTES TO THE RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNTS

(1) Accounting Policies

Basis for accounts preparation

The accounts have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis in accordance with Charity Commission guidance.

Income

All income is accounted for when received. Income is allocated by category to enable analysis of income sources at any time.

Expenditure

Expenditure is accounted for when it is paid and is classified under headings that aggregate costs to a category. Expenditure includes VAT which cannot be recovered.

Expenditure is broken down into four categories:

- Direct and Charitable Expenditure;
- Fundraising Costs;
- Management and Administration; and
- Contribution to Central Charity.

There are notes to the accounts showing what is included in each of these categories.

Tangible Fixed Assets

All tangible fixed assets have been expensed. However, all items that cost more than £1,000 are listed on an asset register.

Funds

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objects at the discretion of the Trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for certain activities as specified by the donor or the fundraising process. Relevant expenditure is categorised against each fund.

Details of Receipts**(2) Donations**

Donations	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds Year Ended 31 March 2021	Last Year
	£	£	£	£
Individuals	2,399	-	2,399	2,106
Churches	100	-	100	1,100
Groups in the Community	3,552	-	3,552	3,730
Gift Aid	1,219	-	1,219	2,763
Bequests	2,105	-	2,105	-
Street Collections	-	-	-	49
Total	9,375	-	9,375	9,748

(3) Revenue Grants

Revenue Grants	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds Year Ended 31 March 2021	Last Year
	£	£	£	£
National Offender Management Service	1,314	788	2,102	1,547
Reading Borough Council	-	4,050	4,050	2,025
The Field Seymour Parkes Foundation	-	-	-	1,000
Berkshire HealthCare NHS Foundation Trust	255	1,275	1,530	-
Postcode Lottery	-	3,000	3,000	-
Berkshire Community Foundation	-	3,000	3,000	-
Pears Grant	-	12,835	12,835	-
Total	1,569	24,948	26,517	4,572

(4) Fundraising

Fundraising	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds Year Ended 31 March 2021 £	Last Year £
Business and Corporate Fundraising	6,983	-	6,983	2,798
100 Club	3,562	-	3,562	3,666
Volunteer Initiated Fundraising	2,482	-	2,482	3,128
Marks & Spencer	-	-	-	2,625
Witt Morgan Concerts	5,288	-	5,288	1,801
Bequests and In Memory	-	-	-	422
Sam Jam Sales	1,131	-	1,131	948
FIT Payments	621	-	621	616
Festival Branch Store Rental	500	-	500	300
National raffle	190	-	190	645
Easy Fundraising, Amazon Smile etc	2,276	-	2,276	107
Other	261	-	261	186
Total	23,294	-	23,294	17,242

(5) Bank and Building Society Interest

Bank and Building Society Interest	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds Year Ended 31 March 2021 £	Last Year £
HSBC	1	-	1	10
Virgin	230	-	230	321
Total	231	-	231	331

Details of Expenditure**(6) Direct and Charitable Expenditure**

Direct and Charitable Expenditure	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds Year Ended 31 March 2021 £	Last Year £
Fabric of the Centre	5,686	-	5,686	7,767
Maintenance Contracts	2,455	-	2,455	3,229
Utilities	3,728	-	3,728	6,136
Housekeeping	2,429	-	2,429	4,749
Equipping the Centre	2,045	-	2,045	2,547
Volunteer Expenses	442	-	442	1,393
Conference/Meeting Fees	-	-	-	40
Outreach	3,244	-	3,244	711
Committee Hospitality and Other Costs	20	-	20	17
Volunteer Recognition and Retention	-	-	-	1,105
Gift aiding of expenses	-	-	-	(1,561)
Reading Borough Council (see Restricted Expenditure Note)	-	1,895	1,895	2,025
NOMS (see Restricted Expenditure Note)	-	517	517	1,301
The Field Seymour Parkes Foundation	-	1,000	1,000	-
Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust	-	1,291	1,291	-
Postcode Lottery	-	2,738	2,738	
Berkshire Community Foundation	-	3,000	3,000	
Pears Grant	-	12,835	12,835	
Total	20,048	23,276	43,324	29,459

(7) Fundraising Costs

Fundraising Costs	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds Year Ended 31 March 2021	Last Year
	£	£	£	£
Raising Branch Income	306	-	306	331
100 Club	2,120	-	2,120	2,120
Gift Aiding of Expenses (Timing Difference)	-	-	-	-
Total	2,426	-	2,426	2,451

(8) Management and Administration

Management and Administration	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds Year Ended 31 March 2021	Last Year
	£	£	£	£
Phone Calls	110	10	120	130
Travel Claims	-	-	-	118
Stationery and Postage	8	-	8	22
Hospitality	-	-	-	159
Committee Member Expenses	-	-	-	7
Professional Fees	24	-	24	41
AGM and Annual Review	-	-	-	104
Total	142	10	152	581

(9) Contribution to Central Charity

Contribution to Central Charity	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds Year Ended 31 March 2021	Last Year
	£	£	£	£
Branch Contribution	-	-	-	619
Total	-	-	-	619

Changes to the calculation of the contribution to the Central Charity as a result of COVID 19 have resulted in no payment being due for the current year.

(10) Restricted Funds

Restricted Funds	1st April 2020	Income	Expenditure	31st March 2021
Reading Borough Council	-	4,050	1,895	2,155
National Offender Management Scheme (NOMS)	136	788	517	407
Coop Donation	429	-	-	429
Reading CIC Grant	262	-	-	262
The Field Seymour Parkes Foundation	1,000	-	1,000	-
Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust	-	1,275	1,291	-16
Postcode Lottery	-	3,000	2,748	252
Berkshire Community Foundation	-	3,000	3,000	-
Pears Grant	-	12,835	12,835	-
Total	1,827	24,948	23,286	3,489

Restricted funds include the following:

- Reading Borough Council Grant for recruitment and training costs including printing, some electricity and cost of training sessions;
- NOMS grant for our Huntercombe Prison support;
- Coop donation received for publicity and outreach materials and fees;
- Reading CIC grant for outreach through Town Centre Arts;
- The Field Seymour Parkes Foundation funding is to support activities in the local Reading area;
- Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust to provide software development and materials to support referrals from the NHS;
- Postcode Lottery grant to cover operational costs;
- Berkshire Community Foundation grant to cover operational costs; and
- Pears Grant via Central Office to cover COVID 19 related costs/improvements as agreed with Central Office.