

READING SAMARITANS
TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT
AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1 APRIL 2022 TO 31 MARCH 2023

Charity Registration Number: 1170632

Contents

INTRODUCTION	3
SAMARITANS VISION, MISSION AND VALUES.....	3
CHARITY OBJECTIVES.....	3
CHARITY ACTIVITIES	3
STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT.....	4
ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS	5
FUTURE PLANS.....	6
FINANCIAL REVIEW.....	6
RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUSTEES	9
REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS.....	9
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT.....	10
RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNTS	11
NOTES TO THE RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNTS	12

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
- 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 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

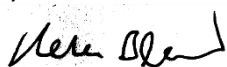
No remuneration was paid to any of the Trustees. Where appropriate, Trustees have been reimbursed for expenses incurred in performing their duties as a Listener, in their Management/Support Volunteer roles or as a Trustee. As with all expenses, these are reviewed and approved by at least 2 signatories. 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					
Cash funds this year		67,442	1,645	69,087	66,351
		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