



SAMARITANS

Cheltenham and District
57th Annual Report

2020 – 2021

HOW TO CONTACT SAMARITANS

You can contact Samaritans by phone, email, online chat, letter, or by visiting a Branch.

Samaritans Helplines are open 24/7 every day of the year.

Telephone: 116 123 (national number, free to call)

Email: jo@samaritans.org

Online Chat: Online chat is available via the main charity website, between 18.00 and 22.00
Sunday to Thursday.

Letter: P.O. Box 90 90, Stirling, FK8 2SA

Visit: Find your local Branch at www.samaritans.org

Cheltenham & District Branch is usually open during the day until 10 pm.

No appointments are necessary. Due to COVID restrictions the branch was
closed to callers during the year.

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Registered charity number: 1170900

Name: Samaritans Cheltenham and District

Address: Victoria House, Back Albert Place,
Cheltenham, GL52 2HN

Website: www.cheltenhamsamaritans.org

Trustees 2020-2021

Helen Bridger, Director and Chair of Trustees

Clive Ridgwell, Treasurer

Emma Colabella, Secretary

Andrew Evans

Arlene Deane

Steve Lalic Co-Opted December 2020

Chair of the Friends 2020-2021

Gary Newman

Health & Safety Officer

David Lawlor

Data Protection Officer

Karen Fill

Independent Examiner

Prime Accountants Group

Bankers

Lloyds Bank plc, Cheltenham

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1. OUR OBJECTIVES

To enable persons in Cheltenham, the surrounding area, and elsewhere, who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those who may be at risk of suicide, to receive 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;

To collaborate with and support Samaritans Central Charity and all affiliated Branches in fulfilling the same objectives.

2. TRUSTEES REPORT

The Branch Director has been appointed to the joint roles of Director and Chair of Trustees since 1st April 2017. The current Branch Director continues to hold both of these roles.

A new Branch Director, Helen Bridger, was appointed to post on 31 March 2020, replacing the outgoing Director, Veronica Ward. Helen and the Trustees would like to acknowledge and record their thanks to Veronica for the three years during which she was Branch Director. The branch has been handed over in a healthy financial position with a committed and dedicated volunteer base.

All branch activities have been seriously affected by the COVID-19 worldwide pandemic which began to take effect in the UK in March 2020. Acting in line with Government and Samaritans Central Office guidance many of our normal procedures and processes were continuously updated to reflect the conditions and national regulations in place throughout the year.

The Trustees took their responsibilities, in terms of maintaining the premises as a safe volunteering environment, very seriously. Updated procedures for safe and hygienic use of the building were considered at each Trustees meeting throughout the year, and updated as appropriate.

The AGM was held virtually, via Zoom, for the first time in September 2020. The constitution requires Cheltenham branch to appoint both a Treasurer and Branch Secretary to the Trustee body. The Treasurer was re-elected and a new Branch secretary was elected at the AGM in 2020. Resignations had been received from the Branch Administrator, the Trustee for Marketing and the previous Branch Secretary. Two further Trustees were elected at the AGM and a Trustee with responsibility for fund-raising was co-opted from December 2020

Throughout the year the Trustees have worked with the Deputy Directors, appointed by the Branch Director. The team has met every 12 weeks to review activities, finances and risks. The main focus of the Trustees during the year was to oversee the upgrading and refurbishment of the operational side of Victoria House. This had been considered as a key objective in terms of improving the volunteering experience and improving retention rates within our volunteer base. It had been some years since the operational side of the building had last been fully upgraded and the work was much needed. As a group the Trustees are very grateful to the dedication of our Treasurer Clive623 who has managed this project with great skill and acumen. Trustees held either zoom or email discussions for decision making on expenditure both for the refurbishment project and for urgent repairs.

The Trustees were also involved in the Quality Outcomes Framework (QOF) Review which was completed at the end of 2020. The result of the QOF was to confirm the very high standards which are exhibited in every area of Cheltenham branch activity.

It was more difficult to organise branch meetings due to the inability of a large number of people to meet in person in an indoor space during the year under review. However, following the AGM in September, a branch meeting was held in December followed by a quiz night. This branch meeting was conducted over zoom and was well received and enjoyed by all who 'zoomed in'.

The Trustees have paid due regard to guidance issued by the Charity Commission and Samaritans Central Office at all times. The safeguarding policy for children was updated in line with Samaritans requirements with effect from 1 January 2021.

The Trustees have fulfilled their responsibility for ensuring that accounting records comply with the Charities Act 2011. The financial situation is summarised on a quarterly basis and disseminated to all branch volunteers by email. The information is also stored in a dedicated area of 3Rings. The position is discussed at each Trustee meeting.

At 31st March 2021, we have healthy cash reserves, however the branch appreciates the need to generate a significant amount of income annually. Action is being taken to repurpose the Frances Twyford Room to have a twin role as both the branch training/meeting room and also as a community hub with an income generating potential. We continue to benefit from the fundraising activities of The Friends and we are fortunate that the Mayor of Cheltenham 2021/22, Steve Harvey, has chosen The Friends to be one of his Charities of the year. We are very hopeful that the outlook going forward is good.

The sections that follow outline the performance and achievements of the charity in the reported year and present the financial statements.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees:



Helen Bridger,

Branch Director and Chair of Trustees

3. DIRECTORS REPORT

At the start of the year under review England was in lockdown due to the COVID 19 pandemic. All of the activities, so central to the operation of our service from branch were being revisited. Face to face delivery of training was suspended, face to face caller support in branch was suspended and all physical outreach was put on hold. Volunteers over the age of 70 and those who were clinically vulnerable or shielding clinically vulnerable relatives were advised to isolate and not to come into branch. Some volunteers were unhappy with that advice and were prepared to continue to come in and support our callers. As we are part of an organisation which believes in self-determination, the leadership team agreed that they should be allowed to do so.

Lots of isolating volunteers helped out in other ways, by doing additional leader duties, which they could still do from home. Other volunteers joined the special helpline set up by Samaritans to support NHS workers. The branch despite being depleted in numbers felt like a very tight-knit and supportive place to be. This first lockdown lasted for around 8 weeks and then, as soon as they were able to, our isolating volunteers started to return to us.

During lockdown around 35 volunteers were missing from branch directly as a result of COVID restrictions. These were on top of around 20 volunteers who were on sabbatical for other reasons. Thanks to the efforts of the remaining active listening volunteers, we only closed 3 shifts, which was a tremendous achievement. Many volunteers did multiple duties each week and there was the distinct aroma of bleach around the place. One of my proudest moments was when an isolating leader told me she had decided to return to listening duties because she had been told that the centre smelled like a swimming pool! Two further lockdown periods occurred during the year, and far few volunteers chose to isolate throughout the second and third lockdowns.

The Branch Leadership Team (BLT) met at regular intervals at the start of the year in order to keep the branch compliant with regulations and to ensure procedures were in place to keep all our listening volunteers safe. Stringent cleaning procedures were put in place, social distancing was required and mask wearing was mandatory. Much of the branch paper-based documentation was removed from the operations room and digitalised to avoid cross contamination. Laminated, wipe clean copies of frequently consulted documents were put in each booth. Many of the old dusty files were removed, and volunteers have steadily got more used to finding information on 3 rings or on the chromeboxes in the centre.

That summarised very briefly some of the difficulties we faced over the year. Our achievements, on the other hand, have been astonishing.

The branch IT systems have blossomed over the year. We have two new TV display units. The TV in the operations room displays information crucial to supporting our listening service. Leaders phone numbers, essential contact information, a list of follow up calls and hot messages are all displayed on this TV. It also shows the national dashboard with wait times for calls, emails and chats. Every volunteer who comes on duty knows which support

medium should be prioritised. The second TV is in our information room. It shows a regularly updated loop of slides and is maintained by our volunteer care deputy. It shows information about our outreach activities both completed and forthcoming. It shows information about monthly branch & regional statistics, inspirational quotations, new additions to our library books, volunteer profiles, "top tips" about procedures which may not be at the forefront of volunteer minds and a welcome message for each group of New Samaritans when they start doing shifts after completing core.

Early on in the first lockdown, our national telephone distribution system (Connect) broke. The branch spent a number of weeks on what we referred to as 'the back-up platform' – a sorry experience for both callers and volunteers. Eventually, it was decided that connect couldn't be fixed and the replacement service (Link) which was due to be gradually rolled out over many months, was installed at great speed.

The IT team did an amazing job enabling our volunteers to learn the new system whilst maintain social distancing and working remotely. Volunteers embraced the new system and quickly got used to it.

During the first lockdown all volunteers isolating at home were, for the first few weeks, contacted by a member of the leadership team. The volunteer care team then took over this role. It was always the aim that volunteers who were unable to come into branch should feel important to us and valued. We hoped that all would return to us in the end, and the vast majority did. For volunteer week in June 2020, we celebrated the contribution of all our volunteers by baking them heart shaped cookies. Members of the BLT delivered them to members of the branch who were isolating. At Christmas we gifted volunteers Samaritans branded pens.

We completed a major refurbishment of the operational side of the building at the start of 2021. Volunteers were so understanding when we moved our support service to temporary workstations in the FT room. It was a bit messy but we all got on with it. We kept volunteers up to date with the progress with photos on Workplace and the work was completed quickly. In a very short space of time, we were back in our new blue (colour choice by volunteer vote) operations area. Everyone seemed very pleased with their new working environment.

Zoom became a standard part of everyone's life. During the year we trained 5 core groups and delivered embedding via Zoom. Information evenings and interviewing were conducted over Zoom. Unlike other branches, where outreach stopped completely, our outreach team adapted many initiatives and delivered them virtually over Zoom. Samaritans team meetings switched to Zoom and the newly formed branch book-group also convened around computer screens at home, usually with a glass of wine, so not all bad!

During my first year as branch director, it was mandatory that an independent review of the branch was completed. This replaced the "visit" and instead a Quality Outcomes Framework (QOF) had to be completed. Two external mentors then met with the Trustees and BLT and

reviewed the information recorded on the QOF. The outcome was that Cheltenham branch was regarded as an exemplary example of how Samaritans branches should be operating. As part of the process, we agreed 3 objectives to work towards, all of which have been addressed by the time of writing this report. One of these aims was to increase the number of night hours we cover at Cheltenham. We surpassed our expectations and have added an extra 10.5 listening hours a week, 8.5 of which are night hours between 2am and 6am. In addition, from the end of February, we started participating in the online chat service, and the rota at Cheltenham has always covered all the hours it operates.

At the start of the year, the BLT and particularly the Treasurer, were a little concerned about our ability to fundraise whilst face to face activities were suspended. We are fortunate as a branch that we have reserves to tide us over difficult periods, such as the one we were envisaging. However, our worries turned out to be unfounded. The Friends moved many of their events onto online platforms and ended the year making a donation of £10,500, not dissimilar to previous years. There were sponsored events by volunteers and their families throughout the year which raised nearly £10,000. We printed our own Christmas cards, which were designed by 3 of our volunteers, and sold them to raise funds. They were very popular and were of very high quality. One of our volunteers also made 25 Christmas cakes, for volunteers who pre-ordered. We were fortunate enough to be given some company donations.

We were also recipients of grants from the Pears foundation which allowed us to purchase individual headsets for volunteers who wanted them, and to pay for some of the operational room refurbishment.

These are just a few of the great things we achieved during the year. It is remarkable that we were able to do so much, but maybe I shouldn't be surprised. After all, Cheltenham branch is full of wonderful people. Thank you, everyone, for all you do for us.

Helen 568

Branch Director & Trustee

4. VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT

Despite covid and the limitations and restrictions surrounding 2020/2021, this past year has again proved to be a great success in relation to the recruitment of new volunteers.

We have a loyal and committed Recruitment Team, now consisting of 10 volunteers, who have been involved in the whole process of interviewing and selection of new volunteers.

In the period under review, we received 271 enquiries regarding volunteering at the Cheltenham Branch. This figure represents a 58% increase from the number of enquiries received for the previous reporting year of 2019/2020.

Since January 2021 we now have a new system called the Branch Management Tool (BMT) used in the recruitment of new volunteers and continue to receive our main enquiries through this system via Central Office.

The BMT is an all-encompassing system which has been designed for Branch teams to manage the recruitment and training process for new Samaritans, by automating many of the processes and aiming to reduce workload. Potential volunteers (PVs) can book their own interviews and if successful at interview stage, can submit referee details and book on to training. In most cases, the new recruitment journey will mean that potential volunteers will do a lot of this for themselves. The Cheltenham Recruitment Team are efficiently using this new system. However, in order to provide a more personal service we currently arrange to book interviews directly with the PV and also subsequently liaise with each PV to offer and allocate an agreed training place with each individual.

We continue to hold Information Evenings every 4-6 weeks as appropriate. The Information Evenings, which have been run via zoom, receive very positive feedbacks from PVs as to the information given to them. We are frequently told they find them very helpful and informative at this stage of their recruitment journey. Again, the Information Sessions offer a more personal and in-depth service where the Recruitment Team can attend the zoom Information Session and PVs have the opportunity to ask any questions.

As a result of the recruitment procedure, we have handed 60 new recruits to the Training team over the 12 months under review. The vast majority of these are now doing shifts at the branch, and many have also enthusiastically joined Branch teams and activities, such as Outreach Team, Training, etc.

This has been my first year as Deputy for Recruitment & Selection. In the preceding years I was a member of the Recruitment Team. All of the above would not have been possible without the help of Sue 991 who has been hugely helpful and invaluable in the management and running of the system. Together with the positive and enthusiastic approach from the whole team, it is a great Team to work with and be part of. The feedback from the Information Sessions and from new volunteers joining Cheltenham Branch is that they have been delivered in a professional, friendly and information manner. A big, grateful thank you is given to everyone who has made Recruitment of new volunteers happen.

Carol 974, Deputy Director

5. TRAINING

Since 1st April 2020, training continued to run via two teams within Cheltenham Branch, our Initial Training Team and our In-Branch Training Team. Robin 207 as Deputy Director for Initial Training and Allyson 1090 as Deputy Director for In-Branch Training. Since then, we have now changed our structure for Training where Robin 207 now acts as Deputy Director for Training and we have leads for each section of Training within branch: Robin 207 is lead for CORE Training, Andrew 186 & Isabelle 942 are leads for Mentoring and Allyson 1090 is lead for In-Branch Training which includes both Embedding Development and Continuous Development.

At the start of this year, we were restricted on conducting any training of new volunteers due to the COVID-19 pandemic where our training wasn't suitable to be delivered in a virtual space, this was amended by July 2020. Since then, we have run 5 CORE Training programmes in July 2020, September 2020, November 2020, January 2021 and March 2021 which has led to us putting 58 people through CORE Training and 40 of those are now full members of our branch.

With the Initial Training Team, our first change this year has been with Barbara 236 stepping down as Skills Practice Co-Ordinator after a long and successful tenure. Responsibilities for this have subsequently been shared amongst the Initial Training Team primarily by Milly 998. We have started with the same team as last year with Robin 207 leading with support from Milly 998, Sandy 999 and Dan 314. In September 2020 we were delighted to welcome Ben 804 and Steve 808 into team and shortly afterwards in November 2020 we were also able to have Patricia 728 join our team, all as regular trainers. Initial Training has continued to implement remote skills practice, involving a wide variety of volunteers from our Branch to give our trainees a more authentic and varied experience with their practice calls. We have had such a good response from volunteers willing to give up some of their time to help our team and our new trainees so thank you to everyone who has been involved.

How Mentoring has been implemented over the last year has undergone a change, where traditionally we would allocate a New Samaritan to a mentor for a number of shifts straight after they have completed initial training, now we are doing something different. After a New Samaritan completes CORE Training, they now go on to do a series of extended practice calls with a 'Role-Play Mentor' before they are then handed over to a 'Shift Mentor'. This change was implemented with the purpose of New Samaritans having a higher level of confidence when they first come into branch, this would potentially mean they would require fewer mentored duties before doing shifts unaccompanied. This has been our practice since January 2021 and has so far proven to be successful both from the perspective of the mentors and the trainees themselves.

As a branch we have fully transitioned from delivering SIT2 to Embedding Development for the second half of our training programme for new volunteers. Our In-Branch Training Team led by Allyson 1090 have done a brilliant job of navigating this process of delivering a brand-new course as well as having to do it over Zoom. The foundation of this course continues to be on supporting our New Samaritans with adapting to taking calls and being on shift and supplementing their learning in an experienced-based way. Embedding

Development is a course that may well be subject to change over the next 12-18 months so we will make sure to keep on top of what is going on.

Another aspect of how we have transitioned into a new model of training over the last year has come in the form of moving from the old On-Going Training (OGT) to Continuous Development. The expectation of volunteers to complete five hours of OGT has been replaced with volunteers completing modules set by central office. The first of which came with the module 'Refreshing Our Core Skills' during Summer 2020 and will continue to be set 2/3 times each year.

With training moving forward in Cheltenham Branch we are coming into unprecedented times after the past year. Throughout all of our courses, our teams have grown adept at delivering training remotely in an online setting via Zoom and this isn't something that we are looking to get rid of despite being able to train in person again. Our courses moving forward will likely take a blended approach of being online in some instances and in-person in others depending on the needs of the trainees and the suitability of the training material. We have two more intakes of initial trainees this year in September and November 2021 where we will be initially trialing this new blended approach to training.

Robin 207, Deputy Director

6. VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

This year has proved both challenging and successful for Cheltenham Samaritans and those involved in Volunteer Support have played no small part.

Volunteer Support covers a number of key activities within, the branch. Considering each of these:

Volunteer Care: Volunteers on Sabbatical are contacted regularly to primarily check whether they would like some support but also to discuss future thoughts and plans in relation to Samaritans. This activity has been efficiently and sensitively led by Dawn 660, who co-ordinates contacts between Sabbaticals and the Volunteer Care team of six lovely volunteers.

Partly due to the pandemic there have, at times, been over 30 volunteers on Sabbatical. To help reintegrate returning volunteers into the branch we have set up a small team of 'return mentors' willing to support volunteers as they come back. A similar approach has helped some other longer term absent volunteers return. Not all Sabbaticals wish to come back to the branch though and we've tried to make those who may no longer volunteer with us feel valued for their contributions to our wonderful organisation, as they step away.

As well as working with Sabbaticals, Dawn 660 has helped find meaningful roles for many of the branch Support Volunteers. One key change was the introduction of an extra stage of skills practice between Core training and mentoring and some Support Volunteers, plus some of our most experienced active listeners, acted as effective caller role players, ably coordinated by Dawn. This has improved preparedness of New Samaritans before they start taking calls.

Over the year the intention has been to somewhat extend Volunteer Care to the whole branch; identifying active volunteers who might benefit from support or using Three Rings to see where volunteers have drifted away from the branch. Continuing these thoughts to extend activities is one key aim of Volunteer Support in the forthcoming year.

In general, at Cheltenham we have sought to take a flexible approach to volunteering and have not enforced in any way the traditional Samaritans expectation of a shift a week and a night shift each month. This has worked very successfully as we've extended the rota, had few unplanned closures and had relatively few volunteer resignations.

Our flexible approach coincided with a national Samaritans Volunteer Retention initiative and we at Cheltenham contributed fully to that discussion.

Rota Management: The Rota Management Team, ably led by Nicky 992, can be considered one of the great strengths of the Cheltenham Branch. Each week they enthusiastically highlight rota gaps in a timely manner. As mentioned above, even during the pandemic our unplanned closures remained commendably low in number. Of course, it's not just the Rota Management Team but also those wonderful volunteers who are willing to cover gaps at short notice.

Leaders: The third main task of Volunteer Support in Cheltenham is co-ordination of the Leaders. We are fortunate to have an extremely experienced and capable group of Leaders, many of whom cover multiple shifts. No shift has closed over the year due to Leader unavailability.

Leader meetings have taken place every 6 or 7 weeks during 2021 and these were well attended. Debate and discussion are often robust and enthusiastic at the meetings, as it should be from volunteers who care about the way we do things at Samaritans.

Whilst we have a good group of over thirty Leaders, we have found recruitment of new Leaders to be challenging. Pin-pointing reasons for this isn't easy as we have many, many volunteers well able to fulfil the role of Leader. There are plans to increase our numbers, Vicky 975 and Jon 1036, who jointly co-ordinate Leading at Cheltenham, will continue to lobby volunteers to take on this fulfilling role.

As well as the three key activities (Volunteer Care, Duty Rota Management & Leading), Volunteer Support contributes to volunteer engagement within Cheltenham Samaritans. In late 2020 a new moving slide VDU display was introduced into the volunteer entrance room, and this can be observed by volunteers as they come onto shift. The display includes a variety of different slides from Volunteer Support and Outreach and is updated most weeks. It provides volunteers with information on wider Samaritans issues, gives details of working practices and provides guidance and it gives local branch news.

The intention is that Volunteer Support will continue to arrange occasional speakers for the branch.

Given the challenges faced during 2020 and 2021, Cheltenham Samaritans has provided an admirable and dedicated service to callers. We value our volunteers and want them to feel both supported and fulfilled by their Samaritans work. We have aimed to do this in Volunteer Support and plan to consolidate and extend our activities in 2021 and 2022.

Jon 1036

Deputy Director

7. CALLER SUPPORT

Caller support provides ongoing support to callers to the Cheltenham branch. Currently the team has 4 members, Andrew 651 and Sam 604 who audit e mails and respond to callers of concern flagged on elog by volunteers and through the regional caller support forum. Louise 744 and Sarah 245 are responsible for our continued partnership with CRUSE. Thank you to the team for their diligent and efficient work. Thank you also to Andrew 168 who recently handed over the management of CRUSE and to Anthony 213 who has worked tirelessly perfecting the IT system.

Online chat was introduced in Cheltenham on March 1st, 2021. Currently 34 volunteers have completed the training and we have 9 duties per week at present. As a trend in wider society, people are using the phone and text messaging less and less. Many people prefer to use instant messaging to communicate with friends, family and businesses. Younger callers have grown up surrounded by the internet, mobile phones, messaging, social media, and are far more likely to look for sources of support online. Although we continue to see high levels of demand for our telephone and e mail services, our research and piloting with callers indicate that some people would prefer to contact us over online chat. The online chat service gives callers the chance to talk to us in a way that they feel most comfortable.

On the 31st March 2020, Cheltenham joined the South West region. Quarterly regional meetings have continued by zoom which are both informative, helpful and interesting. We have gained valuable support from the regional officers and the other teams within the region. Central office is in the process of setting up a caller support and safeguarding hub which will remotely deliver caller support plans and review eLogs with caller support flags. The hub will also investigate safeguarding cases that have been referred by volunteers, make all external safeguarding referrals and respond to general caller support and safeguarding queries from branches.

Caller Support provides up to date information to aid volunteers, guidance on handling callers of concern, updating signposting lists, no call back numbers, misuse of service list and ensuring best practice for follow up calls and the written word.

Statistics for 2020 / 2021 are shown below

Total logged contacts	23,969
Inbound telephone calls	16,528
Outbound telephone calls	400
Snap calls	3,797
Face to face	0
E mail	3,151
Online chat	93

Letter	0
Total	23,969
Gender breakdown	
Male	41%
Female	55%
Transgender	0.5%
Unknown or other	4.5%

Andrew 651

Deputy Director & Trustee

8. OUTREACH

The current Outreach Steering Group (OSG) was formed in autumn 2020, following my appointment as Director Outreach, comprising of me, Laura 234, Andy 655 and Helen 726. In spring 2021 Sarah 672 joined OSG as Media / Comms specialist. I am grateful to all members of OSG for their unstinting commitment and energy.

We have benefitted throughout this period from the strong support of Helen 568 as Director and Clive 623 as Treasurer. Jon 1036's video loop has played an important role in publicising outreach activities among branch members. Also, Emma 229 has been a constant source of encouragement. COVID 19 has made this a year of exceptional challenge for outreach with face-to-face activities not permitted during the year. Remote working and virtual technology have made rapid strides accompanied by valuable ESOS training from Allyson 1090 but there is a clear emotional need for all of us to re-engage with personal meetings and contacts.

Achievements

- Early OSG strategic thinking was to seek a coherent strategy in which we could be proactive rather than merely reactive responding to opportunities as they presented themselves
- High-level contacts made with MP for Cheltenham and the Lib-Dem Prospective Parliamentary Candidate.
- Of importance have been the firm links established with (Gloucestershire Suicide Prevention Partnership) GSPP and Cotswold VCS (Voluntary Community Services). Through attending these meetings, I have been able to build awareness of Samaritans and prepare the way for suitable partnerships
- The collection and delivery of 120 Christmas Boxes to a Cheltenham charity and an energetic "Brew Monday" giving virtual support in active listening to several local organizations got 2021 off to a flying start
- The outreach structure adopted consisted of "Bubbles" and "Huddles". Bubbles were interest groups such as "health and well-being" and "schools and universities" while Huddles were Samaritans coming together in local communities to promote Samaritan causes and enjoy some fellowship, first Huddles Charlton King's and Cirencester
- Good links in education have been formed with Gloucester College, Cirencester College, the University of Gloucestershire and the Royal Agricultural University
- Partnership in development stage with Gloucestershire NHS, also contact made with Cirencester Primary Health Care Trust
- Emergency Services & Armed Forces Bubble (ESAF) has formed close links with Gloucestershire Constabulary
- Contact made and support provided for GGLC including Pride Event
- We have reached out with some success to Foodbanks and supermarkets

Anthony 407
Deputy Director

9. PRISON SUPPORT

Long Lartin is a high security men's prison in Worcestershire, about 22 miles from the Samaritans Centre. It currently accommodates nearly six hundred men, almost all of whom are serving long sentences.

The past year has been a very challenging one in the prison which did suffer from a bad outbreak of Coronavirus. In order to contain the spread of the virus as much as possible, and because of staff shortages, the prisoners were held in their cells for up to 23 hours a day. They could receive no visitors and could not associate with each other beyond a small bubble of seven or eight men. Initially, at least, the prison found it difficult to provide the men with distractions and even the library was unavailable to them. This situation was prolonged and prisoners were not allowed to associate with men on wings other than their own. The Listeners were not exempt from these rules. Consequently, they have not been able to meet, either with Samaritans or even with each other. The resultant frustrations have been great.

In order to enable us to maintain contact with our Listeners, we were provided with a special mobile phone on which the Listeners were able to call to debrief. While this system suited some of them, others found it difficult to talk and it was not easy for them to be sure of not being overheard. Our training of a keen new group of Listeners was interrupted in February 2020 and very briefly resumed in November, only to be curtailed again after a week.

The year began with our Listener numbers reduced to 6 (we should have at least 12) but two of them were transferred during the year to category C prisons which was excellent news for them but sad for us. They have both immediately made enquiries about being Listeners in their new prisons. The remaining four Listeners have been extraordinarily steadfast in continuing to do what they can to help their fellows but sadly there are four wings on which there are no Listeners and so most prisoners have not had access to Listeners at all,

It has been good throughout the year to be in occasional contact with other prison teams, both in our region and nationally. We have been able to share experiences and it has been supportive to know that we are by no means alone in experiencing great difficulties.

On a more optimistic note, we have had a wonderful expansion to our prison team. Despite losing one of our experienced members, we now have sixteen members, with another two-completing clearance. It has been disappointing for them that they have not been able to visit the prison but it is excellent for our future development and they are keenly awaiting opportunities. At the time of writing, we have just been allowed to resume our visits and we hope to be able to train more Listeners in September.

Heartfelt thanks go all the team for their dedication.

Debbie 227

10. FRIENDS REPORT

As we look back over the last covid years, who would have thought of the life changing situation we all find ourselves in.

The Samaritan Volunteers and Service you provide is really appreciate and that the wonderful work on the phones, and in person that the Cheltenham Branch does. This service is amazing to local people. Where am I going with this? I hear you say. I believe that this is the catalyst that spurs into action our Friends Committee of enthusiastic fundraisers. The drive and contribution that some of us make is above and beyond the call of duty, continually moving forward, new events, new opportunities. I am proud, as we all are, to be part of Friends of Samaritans.

We have new committee members, and a reshuffle of jobs within our team, all to the good, so it keeps a fresh outlook.

I would love to tell you about our 2020, 2021 years of raising funds on behalf of my amazing committee.

With our Festivals being cancelled our opportunity to raise money by working at Lechlade & Glastonbury Festivals had faded away, we are so looking forward to next year and hope that the events industry can survive. We also work closely with the Cheltenham Round table and help steward their big event with the racecourse Fireworks coming up. 2019 saw an additional and unusual event for us, using our contacts at Cheltenham Motor club we were asked to manage carparking in Malvern for 3000 spectators, in September 21 this year, we have been asked to again to steward for even more spectators in Ledbury, we have become proficient at stewarding to the events industry and a new revenue stream.

Our Outdoor Beer Festival has also been hit with cancellation, but next years date could go into your diary as Saturday 11th June 2022 at old Pates. We are wishing to maintain the momentum for our customers of a regular beer festival, and looking at the success of our Virtual Winter Beer festival, we are excited to say that we have our first indoor winter event. We will be at Pip & Jim's venue, St Philips & St James Church Hall, they are excited and we are excited. 25th & 26th February is the date, please come or if you want to help us on the Saturday night to convert a beery venue back to a Church for a service on Sunday, be appreciated.

The success of our beer festivals is well known, the infrastructure and hire rates are now even more expensive, so as a committee we are investing in that infrastructure to save us money in the longer term, to reduce that risk every time we put an event on, we will construct our own pint pulling equipment, once we have found year-round storage. Spending less, making more.

In May this year the new Cheltenham Mayor councillor Steve Harvey approached the committee with an offer we could not refuse, he would like us to join his Mayors Charity committee for a year, this was an opportunity not to be missed.

Mr Mayor, Steve Harvey has been a long-time supporter of the Friends and regularly sponsors us. The added bonus would be that the mayors year fundraising activities would go to FOTS.

So jointly, we have a social night at the Mayflower, a Quiz and curry night in November at the Everest. Our big event is at the Cheltenham Town Hall Saturday January 22nd, the Mayor has given this day for free. So, all you pop pickers, get your thinking hats on as we are looking for teams of up to 6, for the "Retro Pop Quiz". "Retro" yes, no questions after year 2000, mainly because we just don't know the words!!

This year has been interesting but productive, this year we delivered to Cheltenham Branch, £10,500.

<https://samsfriendscheltenham.com/> is our link, we strive to achieve and communicate with our supporters, take a look.

Our second year of Cheltenham world relay and live during the summer and is encouraging families to contribute mileage to the grand total, whilst keeping active, then a simple donation to our just giving page.

<https://cheltenhamworldrelay.com/#content>

Getting involved couldn't be easier, just pledge your goal distance as a team or individual for the World Relay and then start logging those miles! Funds via Just Giving are really positive.

I wish to thank EVERY member of the committee and "friends of", and all those that help on the day of events without you we could not support as well as we do.

**Gary Newman,
Chairman & Founder member**

11. TREASURER'S REPORT

It has been a really demanding year for the whole country as we faced the pandemic and in particular for those individuals who faced serious difficulties in their lives. The Samaritans organisation stepped forward as we always do for our callers including our NHS staff who have given so much support to those who needed medical care.

The Samaritans dedicated line for NHS staff has been and will continue to be a much-needed service.

We have substantially increased the opening hours of the branch during the year, our volunteers of the branch have performed fantastically well in covering more shifts than ever and ensuring that the branch has stayed open during the most difficult of times of the pandemic

I am extremely proud to be part of this branch and of the Samaritans family.

Victoria House is a wonderful asset to our branch; it became our home in 1996 and during this financial year we completed a major modernisation programme to improve the operational side of the building

We have totally updated our electrical and central heating systems, removed the old disused air conditioning unit and the ceiling vents. We have also renewed all the ceilings and fitted new carpet and flooring throughout and completely redecorated the entire operations area. We have also installed new work desks and built a new work station for our recently introduced Chatline service, thereby increasing the capacity of the branch.

It is now a much better environment that will serve our volunteers for many years to come.

We are extremely grateful to the Pears foundation, Charles Irving Trust and to the Friends of the Samaritans in providing the funds for this work to be completed.

In the new financial year, we will commence the modernisation of the Francis Twyford room with the goal enhancing the training facilities for our volunteers and the establishment of a community hub.

The modernisation work will include the provision of 2 new toilets, with facilities for disabled visitors, a new audio-visual system and the room will also be re-decorated. The work will be part funded by grants from the Pears and Screwfix foundations.

I would also like to express my thanks to Barnaby Hopson from the Samaritans central office in helping and guiding us to the various grants available to support the modernisation of Victoria House.

2021 is the 58th year of our branch and the 25th anniversary of moving into Victoria House, it seems only fitting that we celebrate these milestones with a modern home for our branch for the next 25 years!!

As an affiliated branch, we receive no financial support from the central office, we are totally dependent on the generosity of individuals and organisations in giving us funds to provide our

service to our callers; despite the difficulties of the pandemic, we have increased our income substantially.

We have also benefitted from money raised by branch volunteers through sponsored activities, and received a very welcome legacy of £ 22,000 from the estate of a Samaritan supporter.

With that in mind, if you are in the process of reviewing your will, please give some thought to the possibility of a legacy to our branch, if you require further information, please don't hesitate to contact us on

cheltsamstreasurer@gmail.com

The Friends have now supported the branch to the tune of £420,000 since they started their organisation, they are truly excellent friends to the Cheltenham Samaritans and there is no doubt that we are a better branch because of the Friends.

The option of using Virgin Money Giving as a vehicle for donations continues to be very successful, we receive donations within a week and if applicable the Gift Aid within 30 days without any further administration required from the branch.

We are therefore extremely grateful and are indebted to everyone who has donated funds to the branch over the last year, I am also pleased to announce that my co volunteer Toni 659 will take over the responsibilities as treasurer in September 2021 if she is nominated as a trustee, she has already contributed to the preparation of the accounts and has greatly improved the accounts management system.

If my nomination as a Trustee is successful, I will act as Secretary to the Trustees as well as being part of the Leadership team and will continue with my listening duties.

At last years AGM we voted for a new independent external examiner of our accounts, however due to their existing work commitments, they were unable to give assurances on completing the necessary tasks. We therefore appointed Prime Accountants Group who specialise in supporting non-profit organisations and charities as our new independent external examiner.

This was a necessary appointment in supporting our financial governance undertaking.

Clive 623

Treasurer, Deputy Director & Trustee

12. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF CHELTENHAM AND DISTRICT SAMARITANS

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Cheltenham and District Samaritans

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of Cheltenham and District Samaritans (the Charity) for the year ended 31 March 2021.

As the charity trustees of the Trust 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 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all 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 giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. 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 this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Jeremy Kitson FCA
Prime
Chartered Accountants
Corner Oak
1 Homer Road
Solihull
B91 3QG

Date: ...21st September 2021

CHELTENHAM AND DISTRICT SAMARITANS

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
for the Year ended 31 March 2021**

	Note	Unrestricted funds	Restricted Funds Prison Service	Buildings	Total	Linked Charity Friends	Overall Total 2021	Total 2020
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Incoming resources								
Donations and legacies		56,294	2,216	11,500	70,010	-	70,010	65,030
Investment Income		1,426	-	25	1,451	2	1,453	548
Charitable Activities		-	-	-	-	16,874	16,874	22,234
Total		57,720	2,216	11,525	71,461	16,876	88,337	87,812
Resources expended								
Charitable activities	4	1,188	463	-	1,651	17,292	18,943	12,437
Direct Charitable Expenditure	4	17,798	-	-	17,798	-	17,798	15,852
Management and Administrative Costs	4	9,736	-	-	9,736	94	9,830	6,944
Building repairs and Maintenance	4	2,220	-	36,053	38,273	-	38,273	13,376
Governance Costs	4	2,099	-	-	2,099	-	2,099	-
Total resources expended		33,041	463	36,053	69,557	17,386	86,943	48,609
Net movement in funds		24,679	1,753	(24,528)	1,904	(510)	1,394	39,203

CHELTENHAM AND DISTRICT SAMARITANS

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2021

	Note	Unrestricted £	Prison Service £	Buildings £	Total £	Total £
FIXED ASSETS						
Fixed assets	5	158,662	-	-	158,662	159,650
CURRENT ASSETS						
Debtors	6	600	-	-	600	600
Cash at bank and in hand		121,327	7,855	10,531	139,713	136,102
Creditors	7	(1,229)		-	(1,229)	-
TOTAL ASSETS		279,360	7,855	10,531	297,746	296,352
FUNDS						
Balance at 1st April 2020		255,191	6,102	35,059	296,352	257,149
Surplus or deficit for year	8	24,169	1,753	(24,528)	1,394	39,203
TOTAL FUNDS	8	279,360	7,855	10,531	297,746	296,352

Unrestricted Funds include the balances held by the Friends.

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on 3rd September 2021 and were signed on its behalf by:



C V Ridgwell
Hon Treasurer & Trustee

CHELTENHAM AND DISTRICT SAMARITANS
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

1. Accounting policies

The financial statements of the charity, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Charities Act 2011.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, with the exception of investments which are included at market value, as modified by the revaluation of certain assets.

These accounts include the results for the year of the associated Friends group.

1.2 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Tangible fixed assets other than freehold land and buildings are stated at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost of each asset over its expected useful life as follows:

Fixtures, fittings & equipment	- 15% reducing balance
Freehold improvements	- not depreciated

1.3 Income

All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities once the charity has entitlement to the funds, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Services provided by volunteers are not recognised as income.

1.4 Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

1.5 Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

The funds of the linked charity The Lapworth Educational Foundation can only be used to support the objects of that charity.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

2. Trustees

None of the trustees (or any persons connected with them) received any remuneration during the period (2020: none), but it is the policy of the Charity to reimburse all expenses properly incurred by its volunteers in connection with its charitable activities.

3. Employees

There were no employees during the period (2020: none).

CHELTENHAM AND DISTRICT SAMARITANS
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

4. Analysis of expenditure

	2021 £	2020 £
Charitable activities		
Volunteers Travel	1,188	1,051
National Prison Service Support	463	1,171
	<u>1,651</u>	<u>2,222</u>
Direct Charitable Expenditure		
Telephone, Computer & Broadband Services	9,489	9,852
Electricity, Gas, & Water	3,400	3,000
Housekeeping, Cleaning & Refreshments	3,153	2,000
Marketing	1,756	1,000
	<u>17,798</u>	<u>15,852</u>
Management and Administrative Costs		
Central Office payment	9,736	6,197
Building repairs and Maintenance		
Maintenance & Repairs	2,220	13,376
Capital Projects	36,053	-
	<u>38,273</u>	<u>13,376</u>
Governance Costs		
Independent examination	700	-
Insurance & Governance	1,399	-
	<u>2,099</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>69,557</u>	<u>37,647</u>

5. Tangible fixed assets

	Land and buildings £	Freehold Improvements £	Fixtures, fittings and equipment £	Total £
Cost				
At 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021	96,825	56,239	9,116	162,180
Depreciation				
At 1 April 2020	-	-	2,530	2,530
Charge for the period	-	-	988	988
At 31 March 2021	-	-	3,518	3,518
Net book value at 31 March 2021	<u>96,825</u>	<u>56,239</u>	<u>5,598</u>	<u>158,662</u>
Net book value at 31 March 2020	<u>96,825</u>	<u>56,239</u>	<u>6,586</u>	<u>159,650</u>

**CHELTENHAM AND DISTRICT SAMARITANS
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021**

6. Debtors

	2021 £	2020 £
Other debtors	<u>600</u>	<u>600</u>

7. Creditors

	2021 £	2020 £
Accruals	<u>1,229</u>	<u>-</u>

8. Reconciliation of funds

	Balance at 01-Apr-20	Incoming Resources	Outgoing Resources	Balance at 31-Mar-21
National Prison Service	6,102	2,216	(463)	7,855
Buildings Fund income	35,059	11,525	(36,053)	10,531
Total Restricted Funds	41,161	13,741	(36,516)	18,386
Unrestricted Funds	245,692	57,720	(33,041)	270,371
Friends	9,499	16,876	(17,386)	8,989
Total Unrestricted Funds	255,191	74,596	(50,427)	279,360
Total Funds	296,352	88,337	(86,943)	297,746

Restricted fund balances of £7,855 (2020: £6,102) are held in relation to grants received from the National Prison Service for the Charity's work at HMP Long Lartin.

The Building Fund which is restricted for the maintenance and enhancement of the charity's present or future buildings has a balance of £10,531 at the year end (2020: £35,059).

9. Related party transactions

During the year, the Trustees of Friends agreed a donation of £11,500 (2020: £10,000) to the Charity.