



Cheltenham and District

58th Annual Report

2021 – 2022

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 Monday to Thursday and between 18.00 and 20.00 on Sunday.

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 2021-2022

Helen Bridger, Director and Chair of Trustees

Toni Hardie, Treasurer

Clive Ridgwell, Secretary

Andrew Evans

Arlene Deane

Steve Lalic

Chair of the Friends 2021-2022

Gary Newman followed by Leigh Norwood

Health & Safety Officer

David Lawlor

Data Protection Officer

Susan Honeywill

Independent Examiner

Prime Accountants Group

Bankers

Lloyds Bank plc, Cheltenham

CONTENTS

- 1. Our objectives**
- 2. Trustees Report**
- 3. Director's Report**
- 4. Volunteer Recruitment**
- 5. Training**
- 6. Volunteer Support**
- 7. Caller Support**
- 8. Outreach**
- 9. Prison Support**
- 10. Friends Report**
- 11. Treasurer's Report and Financial Statement**
- 12. Financial statements and Independent Examiner's Report**

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, Helen Bridger, continues to hold both of these roles and has done so since March 2020.

All branch activities have continued to be 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 2020/21 AGM was held as a volunteer only hybrid event September 2021. There were a small number of volunteers present in the branch whilst others chose to attend via zoom. Elections were a combination of pre-cast votes and votes at the AGM itself. The constitution requires Cheltenham branch to appoint a Treasurer and a Branch Secretary to the Trustee body. Both a new Treasurer and a new Branch secretary were elected at the AGM in 2021. The outgoing Treasurer was elected to the role of Branch Secretary which was vacant following a resignation, whilst the vice Treasurer was elected to the lead role of Branch Treasurer. Three further Trustees were re-elected at the AGM. All Trustees have signed the required documentation, confirming their suitability to act as a Trustee, as required by the Charities Commission.

Throughout the year the Trustees have worked with the Deputy Directors, appointed by the Branch Director. They have 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 to the remaining part of Victoria House, following the extensive work completed on the

operational side of the building, the previous year. The intention was to create a space which would not only service as a venue for internal events and training, but also be available for external users whose presence would not interfere with our core operational activities. To date we have regular arrangements with four external users and this helps to finance the ongoing costs of operating services from Cheltenham. Externally this space is known as “The Hub at the Frances Twyford Room”. As a group the Trustees are very grateful to the dedication of Clive623 who has managed this project with great skill and acumen and who has managed the booking system.

The Trustees were consulted and agreed expenditure for each stage of the refurbishment project and when urgent repairs were required. In addition, the Trustees were informed as part of the process of implementing the safeguarding changes, required by the Central Charity, and detailed in the Director’s Report.

Following the AGM in September, a branch meeting was held in December followed by a quiz night. This branch meeting was intended to be a hybrid meeting but was eventually conducted over zoom following a pre-Christmas spike in Covid cases.

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. Going forward, the Frances Twyford room will be identified as a discrete cost centre. The financial information is stored in a dedicated area of 3Rings and is available for all volunteers to access. The position is appraised at each Trustee meeting.

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 & Chair of Trustees

3. DIRECTORS REPORT

At the start of the year under review England was still learning to adapt to the effects of the Covid pandemic which changed all our lives in March 2020. All of the activities, so central to the operation of our service from branch were being revisited regularly and gradually some degree of normality resumed over the year. Although there was joy that some activities could resume “in person”, some degree of hybrid working has continued, with zoom being offered as an alternative to being in branch when appropriate. Face to face delivery of training was restarted, as was physical outreach. However, face to face caller support in branch remains suspended.

The Branch Leadership Team (BLT) met every 12 weeks 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 for certain periods of the year. These restrictions were gradually relaxed although there remains a culture within the branch of cleaning work stations at each shift changeover.

The BLT was also responsible for maintaining the procedures and protocols for the operational side of the branch. As a result of input from the Charities Commission, national changes were made to the way Samaritans safeguard children and vulnerable adults, with a more pro-active approach expected than had previously been the case. This amounted to a fundamental change in the way that Samaritans volunteers were expected to operate. These changes were implemented successfully, at branch level, in line with instructions from the Central Charity. Cheltenham branch has one volunteer who is a member of the national safeguarding team.

In addition to the safeguarding changes, during the year we have seen a change in the way that our email callers are being supported. Many emails are now dealt with by volunteers who are part of a remote-working hub. There is a timeframe, the end of which will see all emails to our service processed within the email hub. To date no volunteers from Cheltenham branch have chosen to join this hub, but this may well change in the future.

In addition to the email hub, 2 other hubs have been set up where volunteers can work remotely. One hub supports regular callers, on the telephone and by email, who have complex needs, and the other hub oversees the quality of volunteer support both verbal and written. To date Cheltenham branch has one volunteer in each of these hubs.

The volunteers involved in these additional roles still continue to belong to the Cheltenham branch and do duties in line with expectations.

One of the effects of the restrictions and lockdowns caused by Covid was a record number of people asking to train as Samaritan volunteers. This obviously impacted on volunteer numbers within the branch. Our high point was reached in July 2021, when the branch had over 200 volunteers of which 150 were active listening volunteers. The remainder being a mixture of support volunteers, sabbatical volunteers and those who were starting to disengage and drift away from the branch. Sadly, since July we have seen a tail off in volunteer numbers. A reflection, maybe of the relaxation of covid rules and volunteers no longer having time for us as their lives 'returned to normal'. At the end of the year our active listening volunteers had fallen back to 137.

During the early part of 2021, we found ourselves under pressure to open up enough slots on the rota for everyone to find a weekly shift. We undertook a branch survey of all volunteers to understand how volunteers choose to book shifts and gauge the popularity of shifts at different times of day. Using the results as guidance (in conjunction with the 'hours of most need' national data), we opened more 3 person duties and were open for all the

online chat hours the service was available. We were consistently a high performing branch in our South West region regularly providing the most volunteer hours and fewest ad hoc shift closures – a testament to the commitment of our volunteers. However, the fall in our volunteer numbers has resulted in a drop in the number of volunteer hours contributed each month and a gradual increase in shift closures. This is a trend which is being seen across the whole organisation, and compared to some other branches, Cheltenham still performs with excellence. We continue to try to operate a rota which only allows the branch to schedule 5.5 hours of closure per week.

The refurbishment of the operational side of the building was completed in the previous financial year, which left the Frances Twyford room, the hallway and director's office looking a little shabby. These areas were upgraded during this financial year and the Frances Twyford Room is now a fantastic space which can be used as a community hub and meeting venue for external groups as well as internal meetings and training. We have 4 organisations who regularly use our facilities in exchange for a donation to the branch.

Early in 2022 the BLT took part in an exercise to consult with volunteers on an individual basis to gain some feedback about their volunteering experience. Whilst there was some small degree of discontent with some of the central charity initiatives, the results were hugely positive, and particularly complimentary about the way Cheltenham branch operates. The results were shared with the whole branch and we have already taken the opportunity to put in place some of the suggestions made.

The IT team, as always, provided excellent support to the branch during the year. I know, when I speak to other branch directors, that the IT at Cheltenham is way ahead of what is available elsewhere and we are so grateful for their input. They have improved the WIFI in all areas of the centre with different networks (with different security levels) available for volunteers and guests. Early in 2022, the IT team also researched and installed headset amplifiers for the phones in the operations room. These amplifiers have made a huge difference to the sound quality of our calls.

In addition to the awareness raising events summarised in the Outreach Report, we arranged for Samaritans branding to be displayed on petrol pumps at two petrol stations in Cheltenham during July 2021. This was timed to correspond with the national "Talk to Us" campaign. A team from Cheltenham branch took part in the national 310,000 steps in March challenge. Wearing our Samaritans branded T shirts we walked in Cheltenham, Cirencester, Kemble, Stow and Tewkesbury to raise awareness, and also raised nearly £1,000 in sponsorship. Additionally, we have paid for the refurbishment of a bench on the Lower High Street, in an area of high footfall, and it now has a plaque on it with our contact details.

As with the previous financial years, the branch leadership was concerned about finances during the year, as we get no financial support from the central charity. We had also completed the refurbishment of the whole building over a two-year period. We are fortunate as a branch that we have reserves to tide us over difficult periods and we still have substantial reserves following the work which has been done. The Friends were able to

give us a donation in line with previous years for which we are always immensely grateful. There were sponsored events by volunteers and their families throughout the year which raised nearly £3,500. We again printed our own Christmas cards, which were designed by 3 of our volunteers, and sold to raise funds. Volunteers were given personalised Samaritans pens for Christmas as they were last year. We were charity of the year for Kallidus and they raised over £3,000 for us. We were also recipients of grants from the Pears and the Screwfix Foundations which allowed us to upgrade our audio-visual systems and to pay for some of the refurbishments.

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 & Chair of Trustees

4. VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT

Volunteer Recruitment continued to be busy, particularly during the first half of 2021/22 with the interview and selection of new volunteers

There was a huge increase during the 'covid period' where numbers of people wishing to apply to volunteer at the Branch soared. We then started to see a dip in applications to volunteer at the beginning of 2022. Fortunately, there now appears to be a trend to a levelling out of numbers for volunteering to a more normal and realistic level.

During the period 31 March 2021 to 1 April 2022, 198 enquiries were received to apply to volunteer. This represents

- 37% decrease from the previous reporting year of 2020/21
- 48% increase from the reporting year 2019/20

From the month of August 2021 we welcomed the opportunity to recommence interviewing face-to-face at the Branch in accordance with covid regulations. Zoom interviewing had worked well, but carrying out interviews at the Centre was popularly received by both the recruitment team and potential volunteers (PVs), and carried out in accordance with covid guidelines.

We have a recruitment team of 12 dedicated volunteers, who continue to help and be involved with the Information Sessions and interviewing. I always welcome and enjoy carrying out interviews with members of the team, where there is immense satisfaction in holding an interview and meeting a new and keen potential volunteer.

We continue to use the Branch Management Tool (BMT), which was brought in from January 2021, for enquiries, interviewing and selection. Apart from the normal teething problems at the beginning it is working fine with the system.

We currently run Information Evenings every 4-6 weeks as appropriate. The Information Evenings, which we hold by zoom, receive very positive feedback from PVs. At the interview stage we are told by PVs the Information Sessions greatly help them to decide whether they wish to go further with their application. We are looking to hold future Information Sessions at the Centre

This year we have also revamped the Information Sessions to give a more concise and clearer picture of what volunteering at Cheltenham Branch means. We had interesting discussions with other branches, including Bristol, Bath and Gloucester, and were invited to the Bristol Branch Information evening. We gained a lot from this and it was also very helpful to liaise with other branches and gain their views and perspectives.

Following successful interviewing, we handed over 46 PVs to the Core Training Team in 2021/22 for the four courses that were run during this reporting period

Thank you so much to the Recruitment Team for being so helpful and accommodating in what they do for recruitment, with the time they give, humour and enthusiasm. Sue 991 continues with a large amount of work, and her time, reliability and commitment is invaluable.

Carol 974
Deputy Director

5. TRAINING

Since April 2021, Training in Cheltenham Branch has been co-ordinated by Robin 207 as Deputy Director for Training. We have continued to segment training into different teams: a team for CORE Training, Mentoring, Embedding Development, Continuous Development and lastly a new function of Role-Play Mentoring. Since September 2021, CORE Training has been led by Patricia 728, Mentoring continues to be led by Andrew 186 & Isabelle 942, Role-Play Mentoring is co-ordinated by Dawn 660 Embedding Development is led by Robin 207 and Continuous Development is led by Helen 568 & Robin 207.

Between April and September 2021 we were continuing with conducting Training almost exclusively over Zoom, since then however we have been carefully re-introducing face-to-face training in branch in all aspects of our training. We are now at the stage where we are conducting the majority of our training in person but using Zoom based sessions or blended sessions where appropriate and where we can do so without sacrificing any level of quality or support during the training. We have run 4 CORE Training programmes, in May 2021, September 2021, November 2021 and January 2022 where we have had 37 people complete CORE Training where 23 of those are now full members of the branch with more to complete their Embedding Development.

With CORE Training, we have seen a number of changes to the Training Team over the past year. We have had Milly 998, Dan 314, Steve 808 and Ben 804 step back from training, for a variety of reasons but we are very grateful for all their contributions towards the delivery of training in our branch. Since September 2021, CORE Training has been led by Patricia 728 with support from Sandy 999, Andy 665, Robin 207 and Katie 662 who was supporting training as Skills Practice co-ordinator. In Cheltenham Branch we have continued to use remote Skills Practice during our training, meaning that all of our Skills Practitioners have been supporting our trainees from home. This is an aspect of training that we are always looking for as many different volunteers to support the training team with as possible, and luckily we have continued to have a good response from a number of volunteers who have given us their time to support with our training.

We have also had a number of changes to the syllabus for CORE Training, we are now running 7 trainer-led sessions in each program where the main change is we now have an additional session to take our time and offer additional support on working through supporting callers who experience feelings of suicide. The program continues to be blended with a mixture of trainer-led sessions as well as independent digital learning.

We have continued our mentoring in Cheltenham with the model of assigning each trainee with a 'role-play mentor' and a 'shift mentor' at the end of their CORE Training. Feedback continues to be that more trainees are having the confidence to take a call on their first duty with their shift mentor and having the additional skills practice at the end of CORE Training has been a good opportunity to apply their learning to some more difficult call-based scenarios.

Embedding Development has seen a number of changes in the past year, since January 2022 we have moved towards a new syllabus which has changed a number of the sessions. Action Learning Sets has now changed to Listening & Coaching Skills and we now have our final session of Embedding on the topic of Ending Calls. We anticipate that there will be further changes to Embedding Development in January 2023. Until September 2022 the team was continued to be led by Allyson 1090, after this point Robin 207 now leads Embedding Development with support from Sandi 793, Judy 791 and Mike 669.

Continuous Development has continued in the form of mandatory digital modules to be completed independently by volunteers, there hasn't been an expectation for any trainer-led sessions of Continuous Development and we have held back on running additional sessions in consideration of not over-burdening volunteers at this time. Later in the year we will be running a mandatory trainer-led session of Continuous Development on the topic of 'Applying our Key Policies & Safeguarding' which will be delivered to all of our listening volunteers by the end of the calendar year.

We have 2 more intakes of potential volunteers planned for CORE Development in May and October 2022 and then looking ahead to 2023 we are planning to run 3 more courses, we will continue to work with a mixture of face-to-face and virtual training and will be anticipating to incorporate any changes to our training material which will next be due in January 2023. As a team we are looking to recruit some new trainers specifically for our

CORE Training Team as well as a continued need for as many available mentors and skills practitioners as possible.

Robin 207
Deputy Director

6. VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

During the past year, our volunteers have continued to provide outstanding support to callers, on the telephone, by the written word through email and on-line chat and during Outreach activities. The commitment shown is extraordinary, commendable and inspirational. Statistics taken from Three Rings show that in the 12 months to the end of the reporting year

+9, when compared to the previous 12 months, we had answered 6.5% more calls, answered 18.5% more emails and had supported nearly 2,000 on-line chat callers. In addition, volunteers supported a range of Outreach activities and the Prison Team continued their incredible support of listeners at Long Lartin. Cheltenham Samaritans continues to be a vibrant and healthy branch and activities under the umbrella of Volunteer Support play a key part.

Volunteer Support at Cheltenham encompasses a wonderful group of capable and committed Samaritans; including Leaders, the Rota Management Team and Volunteer Care. Each merits their own review:

Leaders: The contribution of our Leaders has been second to none. As in the previous year, we have not had to close any shifts through lack of a Leader, despite a reduction in Leader numbers in the second half of the year. Leaders at Cheltenham put volunteer welfare at the forefront of their role. Being a big branch, there's a risk volunteering at Cheltenham might seem a little impersonal. Making volunteers feel welcome, valued and supported is therefore a key part of the Leader role.

Many of our Leaders have multiple roles within the branch and as such are well placed to support volunteers both emotionally and in Samaritans policies and procedures. As mentioned, the emotional support Leaders offer is something we consider paramount; we want volunteers to feel there is someone there when needed both during and after their shifts.

Leader numbers fell a little in the first half of the year and at one time we had less than 30 active Leaders for a rota with nearly 60 shifts. Some of our most experienced Leaders once again helped by covering extra shifts and by going above and beyond what might be expected, without reducing the levels of Leader support for volunteers.

Towards the end of the year, we've recruited a number of new Leaders. It's extremely encouraging that newer and talented volunteers have put themselves forward for Leader training. It's estimated we need a pool of at least 40 Leaders to allow us the flexibility to

ensure safe shift coverage. At the time of writing, we have 39 Leaders with a few more interested in training

To support Leaders and to share branch information, we have Leader meetings every few months and these continue to be well attended and a good forum for discussion of any issues and the exchange of key information. Meetings are blended, being attended both at the centre and on-line, and this helps with attendance. It illustrates how the advances and investment the branch has made in IT creates a platform and opportunity for improved volunteer engagement. With Leaders, as with all volunteers, we want them to realise how appreciated they are and how much they bring to their co-volunteers and, ultimately, our callers

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 continues to be efficiently and sensitively led by Dawn 660, who co-ordinates contacts between Sabbaticals and Volunteer Care with a lovely small team of four volunteers.

During the pandemic there were over 30 volunteers on Sabbatical. Some had been absent from the branch for well over 12 months. We made the difficult decision to gently encourage Sabbatical volunteers to work with us on returning to the branch but if the time wasn't right for returning they could step back from Samaritans until such time they were ready for regular shifts again (if that were their wish). As we tell many volunteers who become inactive, ex-volunteers often return and we want them to know that by stepping away from volunteering now it doesn't mean they can't return when and if circumstances allow.

During the pandemic we had taken a flexible approach to Sabbaticals, perhaps more so than the 'Preparing to Resume Duties' national guidelines. We felt a flexible approach worked well for the branch as many of our volunteers continued to make valuable contributions even when on Sabbatical or not completing regular shifts. We decided to draft our own version 'Guidance for Volunteer Care at Cheltenham Samaritans' which endeavoured to lay out some guidelines for our flexible approach.

As well as working with Sabbaticals, Dawn 660 continues to help find meaningful roles for many of the branch Support Volunteers. This includes engaging some of them in the previous year introduction of an extra stage of skills practice between Core training and mentoring. An initiative that prepares new Samaritans well for their first calls.

Rota Management: The Rota Management Team, ably led by Nicky 992, remains one of the great strengths of the Cheltenham Branch. During the year, a number of team members stepped down but their positions have been filled and the Team works more effectively than ever. Each week they highlight rota gaps in a timely manner. Cheltenham continues to be a branch with low numbers of unplanned closures, a testimony to the work of the Rota Management Team; and also to those many volunteers willing to step in and fill shifts at short notice

Through the year the number of active volunteers at Cheltenham fell somewhat and this increased our shift closures towards the year end (albeit the closures level is still low). This

led to a review of the rota and volunteering patterns. We have seen a gradual reduction in active volunteer numbers through the year. Looking at statistics over the last two years, we see that if we have 150 active volunteers each month, we are highly unlikely to have unplanned closures, and can support planned Outreach and Prison shifts. The trend of lower volunteer numbers and higher ad-hoc shift closures is a concern but at the time of writing we have a new training group just started in-branch, some returning volunteers and a further training group in the autumn. Clearly getting the balance between the rota demands, resignations, recruitment and training is challenging but the evidence is encouraging that we'll continue to attract committed and skilled volunteers in enough numbers to support our current shift rota.

In summary, as Volunteer Support we try and create a mutually supportive culture. We have a volunteer lobby moving screen display which aims to keep people informed and updated each fortnight with general information plus Samaritans Central Office and branch news. In addition, we have had a number of excellent speakers during the year, arranged with the help of Laura 234. These included an on-line event hosted by the Speakers Collective, with Gloucester Branch, where we heard from speakers with lived experience of Samaritans. We also have a full programme of branch speakers arranged running into 2023.

Finally, a personal note, as this may be my last year as Volunteer Support Deputy, at least as part of this Directorate. I took on this role as someone who'd completed my expected shifts each year for 12 years and done not much more for the branch. Whilst it's been challenging combining a working life and my Samaritans role it's been uplifting volunteering alongside such fantastic co-volunteers; Helen 568, as Director, has wonderfully ignored my shortcomings on so many occasions and I can honestly say the commitment and ability of everyone on the Branch Leadership Team has been humbling.

I need to particularly thank Nicky and the Rota Team, they do so much, and also Dawn, my friend who is always supportive and wise. There are so many others, Vicky 975, Anthony 213, Laura 234 & librarian Sue 991, who help with Leaders, IT and display content. Thank you all. Sometimes Helen and I head for a coffee around the corner from the branch and we reflect who's on shift, followed by the words 'they're brilliant volunteers'. I know we're lucky to be part of such a great branch, it's the people that make it.

Jon1036
Deputy Director

7. CALLER SUPPORT AND SAFEGUARDING

The last year has seen some very significant changes to how Caller Support and Safeguarding is delivered nationally. In December 2021 the Caller Support and Safeguarding Hub was established. Volunteers within the new hub are now responsible for managing remotely all caller support and safeguarding support plans across the organisation including the ROI. The

South West CS team was disbanded at the same time, I would like to thank Derwood, RSCO and the South West team for all the support that they gave to Cheltenham and District Branch. My thanks also go to Sam 604 who supported me managing the Caller support team. As a member of the newly established CSS Hub, I have been able to keep the branch up to date with caller support and safeguarding concerns. Louise 744 and Sarah 245 continue their responsibility for our excellent, continued partnership with CRUSE and Anthony 213 continues to work tirelessly perfecting the IT system. Thank you to the team for their diligent and efficient work. As you will see from the outbound call statistics our contribution to CRUSE has nearly doubled in the last year which is not surprising considering the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

Online chat was introduced in Cheltenham on March 1st, 2021, we still complete 9 duties per week. 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, charities, 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. We eagerly anticipate the introduction of more online shifts within the branch. Veteran support has now been included to volunteers who have completed the appropriate training which we are encouraging all OLC trained volunteers to complete.

Caller Support and Safeguarding continues to provide up to date information to support our 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. The remote e mail hub has been introduced with a view to managing all e mail callers, unfortunately this is not totally in place at the moment but despite this Cheltenham branch have increased in the last year the number of email replies by over 18%. With the considerable somewhat unexpected impact of the Covid restrictions being reduced I would like to thank all our volunteers for their support that is reflected in the statistics below. A fantastic increase across the board.

Statistics for 2021 / 2022

Total logged contacts	27,540 up 13%
Inbound telephone calls	17,647 up 6.5%
Outbound telephone calls	400 up 49.75%
Snap calls	4,022 up 5.5%
Face to face	0
E mail	3,866 up 18.5%
Online chat	1,186
Letter	0
Total	27,540
Gender breakdown	

Male	39.1%
Female	51.1%
Transgender	0.1%
Unknown or other	9.8%

Andrew 651

Deputy Director & Trustee

8. OUTREACH

2021/2022 has been a strong year for outreach activities. The strategy has been to

- Develop an engaged group of volunteers trained in providing emotional support in outreach settings.
- Build small teams of volunteers to work in partnership with selected organisations to provide emotional support to those most in need in our local community
- Attend selected events to improve awareness of Samaritans as well as providing an opportunity for recruitment.

Partnerships also continue with key local forums including Gloucestershire Suicide Prevention Partnership to inform the onward strategy and partnerships developed.

Training of volunteers

- As of April 2022, 25 volunteers have been trained to provide emotional support in outreach settings
- Guidelines have been produced which enable other volunteers to provide support to awareness events.

Partnerships with local organisations

- Network Rail. There is now a regular presence at Cheltenham Spa train station on the first Monday of each month. As well as increasing awareness, the volunteers regularly provide emotional support to those passing through the station
- Cheltenham Opendoor. Cheltenham Opendoor is a charity providing support to street homeless and vulnerable people in Cheltenham. In December 2021, our volunteers provided food donations to the charity to support the opening of their new larger premises. We now have a partnership with Opendoor which enable our volunteers to provide face to face emotional support to those most in need. This commenced with an event associated with Brew Monday in January 2022 and continues with presence of 2 Samaritan volunteers on the first Tuesday of each month. Feedback has been very positive.

- Gloucestershire NHS Hospitals. A partnership has developed with Gloucestershire NHS Trust which will lead to support being provided to Gloucester Hospital Emergency Department by a joint team of volunteers from Gloucester and Cheltenham branches.

Events

Samaritan volunteers had a presence at the following events in 2021/2022 with the aim of raising awareness, demonstrating that Samaritans are there for everyone and providing an opportunity for recruitment.

- Three Counties Show
- Cheltenham Balloon Fiesta
- Cotswold Fayre
- University of Gloucestershire Freshers' Event
- Gloucestershire Pride
- Charlton Kings Autumn Fayre
- Charlton Kings Christmas Lights
- Brew Monday events at Cheltenham Opendoor, Cheltenham Spa and Kemble train stations

Forward strategy

Looking forward the aim will be to continue to provide work with Cheltenham Opendoor and Network Rail and also to agree the arrangements for support to Gloucester Hospital Emergency Department. This is likely to include a regular presence by a joint team of volunteers from Gloucester and Cheltenham branch along with a direct referral service for patients in need of emotional support.

In addition, further ESOS training will be provided to ensure volunteers are trained to support selected awareness events over the next year.

Andy 665
Deputy Director

9. PRISON SUPPORT

Cheltenham Branch Samaritans give support to the Listener scheme at Long Lartin prison, a high security men's prison in Worcestershire, about 22 miles from the Centre. It currently accommodates over five hundred men, almost all of whom are serving long sentences.

The year began frustratingly for both us and the Listeners in that we were not able to visit the prison for some months while Covid was prevalent. The Listeners were able to contact us on a dedicated mobile phone if they needed to offload. Some made regular use of the service while others were reluctant and it was a poor substitute for face-to-face meetings. In August,

it became possible to resume meetings and much credit is deserved by the four remaining Listeners that they continued to do what they could in the prison and at least kept the scheme active.

The autumn proved to be a very positive time in that we recruited and trained fifteen new Listeners, greatly assisted by an enthusiastic and helpful Safer Custody department. The training was launched on 29 September when we held a most successful celebration event marking thirty years of the Listener Scheme, attended by our Director and prison team, the Governor of the Prison, the Safer Custody department and all the new trainee Listeners. A long service certificate was presented to one of our Listeners for 10 years in the role. All four of our Listeners received certificates and small gifts and the prison laid on a lavish buffet. The optimistic atmosphere was inspiring and seemed to herald a new era.

We held another celebration when our new Listeners completed their training and received certificates presented by the Governor, along with brand new polo shirts and fleeces donated by the Samaritans. Just as the scheme was progressing well, a further lockdown occurred from early December until February when we were not allowed to enter the prison. Although the Listeners were delighted to see us again and they remained as keen as ever, there have been many difficulties impeding the efficiency of the scheme. The greatest of these has been the restriction on movement between wings and the continuing regime of lockdowns. The Listeners have been heroic in helping men who approach them apparently casually, without formally requesting a Listener. The good that they do in the prison is remarkable and we can only hope that the scheme will be able again to operate as it should. Severe staff shortages affect every aspect of prison life, not least the Listener scheme.

This year we lost three long-serving members of the prison team, Carol 974, Diana 1119 and Mary 1148. They have been stalwarts in the work they have done and the support they have given over many years. We could not have kept the scheme going without them. Our new team is showing the same commitment and the same understanding that prisoners have done terrible things but they are human beings suffering real distress. We can only give our support to the Listeners who do the really tough work.

Debbie 227

10. FRIENDS REPORT

It has been an eventful twelve months for the Friends, but I am pleased to say, one where we finally got back to doing 'real' (as opposed to 'Virtual') fundraising events again.

It is testament to the wide range of talent on our committee that we were able to raise so much money for the branch from 'virtual' events during the pandemic. It was however, such a relief that we could finally get back to doing what we do best – interacting with people.

The gradual lifting of restrictions also meant that we could finally begin to take advantage of our 12-month tenure as the selected Cheltenham Mayor's charity. This saw us get involved in

and organise far more diverse activities than we usually do in a year. It even saw the one-off resurrection (at the Town Hall, no less) of the infamous Pop Quiz that was our 'bread and butter' for so many years in the 80's and 90's. Some events, like the 'Curry and Quiz' evening held at The Everest, were so popular that we are planning on making them annual occurrences.

In May, many of our committee attended the Mayor Handover event at Cheltenham Town Hall and we were delighted to receive a cheque from the outgoing mayor, councillor Steve Harvey, for £10,500. Many thanks go to Steve for choosing us and allowing us to realise such a healthy post-pandemic boost to our fundraising.

For the past seventeen years our primary event of the year has been a summer beer festival. In February of this year however, we organised a very unique beer festival - one held in a Church!

Our 'Winter Craft Beer Festival', run over two days at Pip & Jim's (St Philip & St James church in Leckhampton), was such a success that we feel we have now discovered a much lower-risk method of raising money for the branch'. Going forward our aim will be to hold two beer festivals at this venue every year, one in February and one in November.

We did still hold our much delayed, fifteenth (and final), summer beer festival at the Old Pats and for once the weather was kind to us, making it a roaring success. In fact, it was such a success that our decision to make it the last, was a really hard one to take. However, the unreliability of the British summer weather, rapidly rising infrastructure costs and the advent of so many competing beer festivals, informed our decision. Our next event at Pip & Jim's is an International Beer Festival to be held on Friday 18th and Saturday 19th November.

Our other primary source of fundraising is from stewarding at Festivals and other events, and thankfully these were all back again in style. In November many of our team were on hand to help out at the most successful Round Table fireworks event on record. In May we sent a crew of volunteers to Lechlade festival and our regular team of 28 once again manned the on-site stewards control table at the Glastonbury festival in June.

So, in summary, it is great to be back doing physical fundraising again. As ever, we are pleased and honoured to be supporting the vital work that the branch does for the community. With the Mayor's charity income added to that from our other ventures, we have raised over £18,000 in the last twelve months, far and away our best total ever. We do know however that with the current cost of living crisis, we cannot get complacent. We realise that all charities are likely to find fundraising a struggle in the coming years.

Finally, for me, one of the most encouraging trends this year, has been the much greater involvement and attendance at our events by many of the branch volunteers. This took me back to my early tenure as Chairman of our group in the early 80's where there was so much more interaction between the 'listening' and 'fundraising' volunteers. I really hope that this is something we can build on over the coming months and years.

Leigh Norwood,

Chairman Friends of Cheltenham & District Samaritans

11. TREASURER'S REPORT

The financial position of the branch is stable as we go into a period of economic uncertainty. Our reserves, excluding the restricted fund, are sufficient to cover day to day running costs for the next year and provides a cushion against interest rate rises. Thanks to Clive623 previously committing to a three-year business tariff for electricity ending in June 2023, we are protected for the time being from the staggering increases predicted.

Following on from the major modernisation programme to improve the operational side of Victoria House in FY21, this year saw the complete refurbishment of the Francis Twyford room. The room is now a great space for branch meetings, training, events and for local businesses to hire for a small donation. We are grateful to the Pears Fund and the Screwfix Foundation for generous grants which helped fund the cost of audio-visual improvements and flooring.

The next major project will be to replace the roof over the Francis Twyford room, but no timeline has been decided. Recent quotes have suggested the cost will be in the region of £50k which will be covered by the restricted fund.

FY22 saw the end of Virgin Money Giving, a subsidiary of Virgin Money created 12 years ago for their sponsorship of the London Marathon. Their sponsorship came to an end last year leading to the closure of the platform. As a result, we adopted the Enthuse platform recommended by Samaritans Central Office. Enthuse is a well-established organisation that they believe offered the best overall alternative to VMG. It has been well received and has already been used successfully for various fundraising challenges by volunteers.

I would like to express my thanks to Barnaby Hopson from the Samaritans central office in helping and guiding us during the transition to Enthuse and, also for his support with applying for GWR funding to cover recruitment, training, expenses etc of 6 volunteers, outreach materials and local advertising. He also supported us with the Pears Foundation and suggested applying to the Screwfix Foundation to fund refurbishments.

Following on from lockdown in the prior year, it's been great to see prison claims coming in knowing our volunteers are once again able to support and train the Listeners at Long Lartin. We are grateful to have received an additional contribution on top of expense claims to our branch overheads, in recognition of the support we give to delivering the Listener scheme

I would like to thank all the volunteers who have actively raised money for the branch in addition to their listening and outreach duties; the Friends for their continued support and substantial contribution; the many donors and people who are no longer with us but kindly donated bequests. All donations, large or small are gratefully received.

Finally, I took over the role of Treasurer from Clive 623 in September 2021. His knowledge and continued support as Branch Secretary have been invaluable to me as has the guidance from Helen 568.

Toni 659

Treasurer, Deputy Director & Trustee

12. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

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

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

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

Responsibilities and basis of report

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:22/09/2022.....

CHELTENHAM AND DISTRICT SAMARITANS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
for the Year ended 31 March 2022

	Note	Unrestricted funds	Restricted Funds Prison Service	Buildings	Total	Linked Charity Friends	Overall Total 2022	Total 2021
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Incoming resources								
Donations and legacies		48,979	3,205	10,000	62,184		62,184	70,010
Investment Income		1,457			1,457		1,457	1,453
Charitable Activities					-	23,933	23,933	16,874
Total		50,436	3,205	10,000	63,641	23,933	87,574	88,337
Resources expended								
Charitable activities	4	2,521	2,237		4,758	17,929	22,687	18,943
Direct Charitable Expenditure	4	10,144			10,144		10,144	17,798
Management and Administrative Costs	4	12,624			12,624	200	12,824	9,830
Building repairs and Maintenance	4	53,307			53,307		53,307	38,273
Governance Costs	4	2,031			2,031		2,031	2,099
Total resources expended		80,627	2,237	-	82,864	18,129	100,993	86,943
Net movement in funds		(30,191)	968	10,000	(19,223)	5,804	(13,419)	1,394

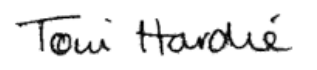
CHELTENHAM AND DISTRICT SAMARITANS

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2022

	Note	Unrestricted £	Prison Service £	Buildings £	Total £	Total £
FIXED ASSETS						
Fixed assets	5	157,822	-	-	157,822	158,662
CURRENT ASSETS						
Debtors	6	5,043	-	-	5,043	600
Cash at bank and in hand		41,964	8,823	74,531	125,318	139,713
Creditors	7	(3,858)		-	(3,858)	(1,229)
TOTAL ASSETS		200,971	8,823	74,531	284,325	297,746
FUNDS						
Balance at 1st April 2021		279,360	7,855	10,531	297,746	296,352
Surplus or deficit for year	8	(24,389)	968	10,000	(13,421)	1,394
Transfer between funds		(54,000)		54,000	-	-
TOTAL FUNDS	8	200,971	8,823	74,531	284,325	297,746

Unrestricted Funds include the balances held by the Friends.

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on ..22nd September 2022.... and were signed on its behalf by:


.....
T Hardie
Hon Treasurer & Trustee

**CHELTENHAM AND DISTRICT SAMARITANS
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022**

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 Friends of Cheltenham Samaritans 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 (2021: 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 (2021: none).

CHELTENHAM AND DISTRICT SAMARITANS
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

4. Analysis of expenditure

	2022 £	2021 £
Charitable activities		
Volunteers Travel	1,529	1,188
National Prison Service Support	2,237	463
	<u>3,766</u>	<u>1,651</u>
Direct Charitable Expenditure		
Telephone, Computer & Broadband Services	2,122	9,489
Electricity, Gas, & Water	2,996	3,400
Housekeeping, Cleaning & Refreshments	1,614	3,153
Library Costs	311	-
Marketing	4,093	1,756
	<u>11,136</u>	<u>17,798</u>
Management and Administrative Costs		
Central Office payment	12,624	9,736
Building repairs and Maintenance		
Maintenance & Repairs	5,028	2,220
Capital Projects	48,279	36,053
	<u>53,307</u>	<u>38,273</u>
Governance Costs		
Independent examination	800	700
Insurance & Governance	1,231	1,399
	<u>2,031</u>	<u>2,099</u>
	<u>82,864</u>	<u>69,557</u>

5. Tangible fixed assets

	Land and buildings £	Freehold Improvements £	Fixtures, fittings and equipment £	Total £
Cost				
At 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022	96,825	56,239	9,116	162,180
Depreciation				
At 1 April 2021	-	-	3,518	3,518
Charge for the period	-	-	840	840
At 31 March 2022	-	-	4,358	4,358
Net book value at 31 March 2022	<u>96,825</u>	<u>56,239</u>	<u>4,758</u>	<u>157,822</u>
Net book value at 31 March 2021	96,825	56,239	5,598	158,662

CHELTENHAM AND DISTRICT SAMARITANS
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

6. Debtors

	2022 £	2021 £
Other debtors	<u>5,043</u>	<u>600</u>

7. Creditors

	2022 £	2021 £
Accruals	<u>3,858</u>	<u>1,229</u>

8. Reconciliation of funds

	Balance at 01-Apr-21	Incoming Resources	Outgoing Resources	Transfers Between Funds	Balance at 31-Mar-22
National Prison Service	7,855	3,205	(2,237)		8,823
Buildings Fund income	10,531	10,000	-	54,000	74,531
Total Restricted Funds	18,386	13,205	(2,237)	54,000	83,354
Unrestricted Funds	270,371	50,434	(80,627)	(54,000)	186,178
Friends	8,989	23,933	(18,129)		14,793
Total Unrestricted Funds	279,360	74,367	(98,756)	(54,000)	200,971
Total Funds	297,746	87,572	(100,993)	-	284,325

Restricted fund balances of £8,823 (2021: £7,855) 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 £74,531 at the year end (2021: £10,531). A balance of £54,000 has been transferred from unrestricted funds for the anticipated roof repair.

9. Related party transactions

During the year, the Trustees of the Friends agreed a donation of £10,000 (2021: £11,500) to the Charity which has been received into the restricted funds.