SAMARITANS OF NORTH HERTS & STEVENAGE

England & Wales · Charity number 1173578

Details

Other names	HITCHIN SAMARITANS
Status	Registered
Legal form	CIO
Registered	2017-06-27
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

Address	5 Nuns Close Hitchin SG5 1EP
Phone	01462453100
Email	north-herts.finance@samaritanseast.org.uk
Website	www.samaritans.org

Activities

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

Activities: The Charity's main objectives are: ? To provide assistance to individuals who are suicidal, in despair or in distress in order to reduce the incidence of suicide. ? To advance education by providing society with a better understanding of suicide, suicidal behaviour and the value of expressing feelings that may lead to suicide.

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Classification

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

Geography

- Hertfordshire

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£34,748	£40,804	-	-
2024-03-31	£87,408	£46,074	-	-
2023-03-31	£26,060	£32,266	-	-
2022-03-31	£13,236	£33,649	-	-
2021-03-31	£60,908	£41,532	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Colin Nicholas Woods		2025-07-06
Emily Mary Madeleine Bryan		2023-09-16
Fiona Mary Pearce		2025-09-25
Joanna Catherine Rachel Coxon		2025-01-01
Karen Proctor		2022-11-28
Karen Therese Long		2025-07-07
Oliver Marchant Cooper		2026-06-01
Wendy Roberts		2025-01-01

Linked charities

- THE SAMARITANS OF NORTH HERTS AND STEVENAGE (1173578-1)

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SAMARITANS OF NORTH HERTS & STEVENAGE

England & Wales - Charity number 1173578

Accounts

SAMARITANS

North Herts & Stevenage

Charity number 1173578

2024–2025 Annual review and accounts

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Directors' message

We are delighted to share this review of North Herts and Stevenage Samaritans for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

At the beginning of January 2025, our three interim Co-Directors stepped down. We owe them sincere thanks for their dedication and commitment in guiding the branch so smoothly over the preceding year.

Our volunteer numbers have continued to grow. Every new Listening Volunteer completes the rigorous Samaritans Core Training, followed by a thorough mentoring period — and we are so grateful to all those involved who guide and support them throughout this journey.

The branch is also sustained by the tireless work of our Trustees, DDs, Support Volunteers, and, most importantly, our Listening Volunteers who give their time so generously to be there for our callers. Together, they form the foundation of our branch's strength. We are constantly reminded of the exceptional level of commitment shown by everyone in our branch. This is reflected in the dedication of our Listening Volunteers to their shifts, as well as our growing engagement with local communities through outreach, prisons, talks, awareness activities, and fundraising. In addition, the many extra tasks and duties carried out by both Listening and Support Volunteers ensure that our branch continues to thrive.

This year has also seen valuable outreach activity, with volunteers delivering talks in schools, community groups, and workplaces, raising awareness of Samaritans' work and how we can support those in need. Alongside this, fundraising has remained vital, and we are grateful to all who contributed, from local supporters to volunteers giving their time and creativity to raise essential funds.

A highlight of the year was the strong attendance at the Regional Branch Conference in February. Feedback from those who attended described the event as inspiring, thought-provoking, and an excellent opportunity to strengthen bonds across the branch.

We would also like to recognise the incredible contribution of Sarah Graham. After the success of her Samarivans fundraising, Sarah created a beautiful book of all the Samarivans paintings and sold copies to raise further funds for our branch. We are deeply grateful for her creativity and generosity.

As we look ahead, we do so with confidence, knowing that our branch is sustained by the compassion, commitment, and energy of our volunteers. Together, we will continue to be there for anyone who needs someone to listen.



Jo Coxon and Wendy Roberts

Co-branch Directors and Chair of Trustee

North Herts & Stevenage Samaritans

About Samaritans

Samaritans provides non-judgemental emotional support, 24 hours a day, for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those that could lead to suicide. We offer our service by telephone, email, letter and face to face, from our branches and at hospitals, schools, prisons, workplaces and festivals, through a network of over 200 branches in the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

From its base in Hitchin, North Herts & Stevenage Samaritans is a charity operating as a branch of Samaritans. Whilst supporting the residents of the surrounding area, it also supports the residents of the whole of the UK and ROI via the Samaritans central calls system.

Our vision

Our vision is that fewer people die by suicide.

To achieve this, we believe Samaritans has a crucial role to play in:

- Reducing the risk factors that make some people more likely to take their own lives.
- Ensuring that people who are at increased risk of suicide are supported.
- Making it less likely that people who do experience suicidal thoughts act on them; and
- Reducing the likelihood that people will develop suicidal thoughts.

Our mission

We're here every day and night of the year for anyone struggling to cope. We make sure people have somewhere to turn and support when they need it most. We work with communities to let people know we're here for them and we campaign to make suicide prevention a priority.

Our values

Our support services adapt to the changing environment, but the values at the core of our listening service remain constant:

- **Listening** – Exploring feelings alleviates distress and helps people to reach a better understanding of their situation and the options open to them.
- **Confidentiality** – If people feel safe, they are more likely to be open about their feelings.
- **Non-judgemental** – We want people to be able to talk to us without fear of prejudice or rejection.
- **People making their own decisions** – We believe that people have the right to find their own solutions and that telling people what to do takes responsibility away from them.
- **Human contact** – Giving people time, undivided attention and empathy meets a fundamental emotional need and reduces distress and despair.

Fundraising

Fundraising, collections and donations

We were able to hold 8 collections during the year across the region: at Tesco Forum Stevenage, Hitchin railway station (Brew Monday), a series of Mostly Comedy events at Hitchin Theatre and at the Samarivans Book Launch at Osinksy's Bar in Hitchin. We are hoping to continue to grow the team of volunteers that help with collections to enable more to take place. In total, almost £2,600 was raised during the year through collections, an important contribution towards our annual operating costs.

Two local businesses retain collecting cans for customers to donate to us and for the 2024/25 year they were: Biggleswade Station and The Three Horseshoes in Willian.

Following on from artist Sarah Graham's fantastic Samarivans campaign in 2023, in early 2024 she proposed also creating a book showcasing all the 200 artwork designs from artists across the UK. After months of work, including a crowdfunding campaign, the Samarivans book was published in November 2024. Thanks to endless promotional work and a book launch in Hitchin, all organised by Sarah, the sales of the book raised a total of £4,110.00, with every penny of profit donated to North Herts & Stevenage Samaritans.

In general, we are seeing an increased use of charity platforms for donations and envisage this will continue to be an important way for us to raise money for the branch.

The value of local support cannot be expressed sufficiently, but we would like to acknowledge this on behalf of all our volunteers and the people that benefit from the service we provide.

Thanks also to those who are taking a few extra seconds when ordering shopping on the internet to enable the branch to receive a contribution from many retailers. To do this, you can use Easyfundraising, www.easyfundraising.org.uk. Web users have also donated via searching online for North Herts & Stevenage Samaritans.

Thanks to everyone for your loyal support, which has enabled our branch to remain fully operational.

Grants

We were very fortunate to once again receive an unrestricted grant from Hertfordshire County Council which will help us to cover our operating costs and continue to perform and extend the outreach services the Branch offers. In addition, restricted grants out of the Locality Budgets were allocated by Keith Hoskins and Richard Thake, which will be made available for the proposed refurbishment of the Branch property.

Supporters

We are very grateful to all the individuals and organisations that help us to carry out the work we do, whether it be through helping with collections, sponsorship and donations, or regular giving.

Donating

If you would like to help us, you can donate:

By bank transfer

Account name: North Herts & Stevenage Samaritans
Account number: 63678547
Sort code: 20-05-73
Please quote your name as reference.

By cheque

Please make your cheque payable to 'North Herts & Stevenage Samaritans' and send it to our branch address: 5 Nuns Close, Hitchin, SG5 1EP.

By text message

Text SAMSLOCAL 3 to 70460 to donate £3.

Texts cost £3 plus one standard rate message and you'll be opting in to hear more about our work and fundraising via telephone and SMS. If you'd like to give £3 but do not wish to receive marketing communications, text SAMSLOCALNOINFO 3 to 70460.

Caller support

In the year to 31 March 2025, our dedicated volunteers have taken over 20,000 calls, spending around 5,500 hours on the phone as well as responding to 600 different chats over 85 online chat shifts.

In our branch we currently have approximately 120 listening volunteers and are always striving to recruit more. There are two listening volunteers on each shift, and we usually average around 40 shifts per week. The greatest demand from callers, in relation to volunteer availability, is the night shifts, therefore we have changed the night shift times to predominantly alternate between 23pm-2am, 3am-6am and 5am-8am. In addition, we have 2-3 Online Chat shifts per week.

As always, we are infinitely grateful to our listening volunteers, each of whom devotes at least three hours per week listening to our callers, which includes one night shift per month.

External relations

Outreach and talks

This year our outreach team has been actively engaging with the local community to raise awareness of Samaritans' support and ensure no one faces difficulties alone.

We have connected with commuters and staff at the local train stations. Post incident support at local stations has provided vital presence and care following challenging events, supporting both staff and the public.

In January we marked Brew Monday at Stevenage station, encouraging conversations and reminding people that we are always there.

Our monthly visits to Lister Hospital offer awareness and support to patients, visitors and staff.

We continued to offer talks and ran awareness activities at North Herts College and attended Stevenage Fire station.

At the start of the year we trained 17 new outreach volunteers, strengthening our team and increasing our capacity to reach more people. Through these activities we have connected with hundreds of local residents ensuring that Samaritans remains a trusted source of support when it is most needed.

Prisons

People in prison are significantly more likely to die by suicide. For over 30 years, Samaritans has been working in partnership with the prison services to support this vulnerable group.

The Listener Scheme started in 1991 in Swansea and is a peer-support scheme for prisons. Listeners are prisoners who provide confidential emotional support to their peers who are struggling to cope or feeling suicidal. They are specially selected and trained for the role by our volunteers. Listeners save lives, reduce self-harm and help those in emotional distress by giving them a confidential, non-judgemental listening ear.

Together with colleagues from the Cambridge branch, some of our volunteers visit Littlehey Prison in Cambridgeshire on a weekly basis. We recruit, train and support the Listener team, helping them do their job as well as promoting the work we do jointly with them to both prisoners and prison staff. We also work closely with the Safer Custody Team to address any issues and ensure the smooth running of the Listener Scheme and its sustainability for the future.

Over the past 12 months, we have recruited and trained 12 new Listeners into the team and have run several Continuous Development sessions. We have also organised a 'Family Day' where the families of our Listeners were invited in to meet the team and enjoy a performance from the prison choir.

Recruitment, training and mentoring

This year, we introduced a structured yearly calendar to support and streamline our recruitment process. The calendar includes three information evenings annually, each followed by a recruitment and interview day, and then the start of core training. This approach allows existing volunteers to plan ahead for when their support might be needed, gives potential volunteers clear timelines for the process, and ensures everyone is aware of training commitments from the outset. We have successfully recruited between 8 and 12 new volunteers in each round, with most going on to complete core training and mentoring.

We are now updating the format of our recruitment day to better align with EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) principles, ensuring everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed. At the same time, we are keeping the most valued elements: particularly the opportunity for potential volunteers to meet and get to know one another, and to explore, in a practical way, the principles and expectations of being a Samaritans volunteer

During the 2024–25 financial year, 21 new volunteers progressed through our initial (CORE) training which ran three times in the year. This involves six weeks of intensive training and homework, including online modules, which make up our 'Core' training. After some weeks of mentored shifts, those new volunteers regroup to complete three weeks of 'Embedding' training, which includes discussions around calls they have taken and their experiences on initial shifts.

We currently have 46 mentors, with roles divided between Key Mentors and those undertaking one-off Support Mentoring shifts.

During the 2024-25 financial year, a total of 21 volunteers have either completed or are currently undertaking the mentoring process to become full Listening Volunteers. This has involved 21 Key Mentors providing the guidance and support required. The Training team have trained 8 new mentors, and we have another group of Listening Volunteers for the next Mentor training.

Being mentored is an important part of the training process. The mentoring phase supports volunteers as they progress from being new trainees to freelance listeners and, ultimately, to fully independent Listening Volunteers. This stage ensures that mentees are well supported, gain confidence, and are prepared to handle calls effectively.

We have a duty of care to both our mentees and ultimately, to our callers.

Volunteer Support

The Volunteer support team aims to have regular and meaningful contact with all our volunteers, whether they are on leave of absence or actively in branch. We maintain close contact with those on leave and, when timely to do so, help facilitate a smooth return to shifts. Our goal is that every volunteer will feel valued, supported and fully connected to the organisation.

Financial review

Overall

The charity's financial activities are shown on page 12 of this report.

The net expenditure for the year was £6,056 (2024: £41,334 net income) comprising of total income of £34,748 (2024: £87,408) and total expenditure of £40,804 (2024: £46,074).

The decrease in income was in line with expectations given the unusually high income in the previous year which had been due to two substantial fundraising events during the year: the National Walk and Samarivans. The charity continues to receive generous levels of donations through online platforms and collections, with the continuation of the Samarivans fundraising initiative also contributing to the current year's income.

The reduction in expenditure was driven largely by the cost of generating funds of £5,705 (2024: £10,826) reducing in line with the reduction in fundraising events. Support costs of £14,467 (2024: £13,602) and expenditure on charities of £20,632 (2024: £21,646) have remained comparable year on year.

The statement of financial position shows the funds of the charity which primarily comprise of fixed assets, fixed asset investments and cash at bank. Interest received from fixed asset investments of £2,633 (2024: £2,811) was in line with expectations and the continued conditions of the bond market resulted in a marginal fair value loss of £1,594 (2024: £952).

The total fund balance as at 31 March 2025 was £118,730 (2024: £126,380), with £100,329 of this (2024: £108,779) representing general funds, made up of both designated and undesignated portions. The closing balance on the undesignated and designated funds are £74,570 (2024: £79,058) and £25,759 (2024: £29,721) respectively. The designated fund continues to be held for the purposes of property refurbishment. Following the receipt of restricted grants the charity now also holds £800 of restricted reserves held specifically for the renovation of the branch property.

The title to the current freehold premises is held by Samaritans as custodian trustee and the charity, subject to a trust deed in respect of its premises.

Reserves

The Trustees reviewed the Financial Reserves Policy in the year since the last review and confirmed the continued policy of holding a minimum level of six months and a maximum of 18 months of undesignated reserves, to allow the Branch to continue operating without financial income for that period without releasing long-term reserves or requiring assistance from SCO. This has been monitored on a regular basis. The Trustees will continue to review the reserves policy on an annual basis. In the period from March 2024, the Trustees have taken full account of the Charity Commission advice on the use of reserves. Cash flow projections indicate that North Herts & Stevenage Samaritans will end the financial year (2025-26) with unrestricted funds above the minimum reserves level.

Risk management

The trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed. At their meetings, they carry out this duty and ensure appropriate controls are in place and any necessary action is taken to mitigate such risks. The risk register is reviewed regularly by Trustees at, or outside of, their meetings.

We operate outreach activities under guidance provided by SCO and risk assessments are completed for all such activities.

Future plans

Cash flow estimates indicate that North Herts & Stevenage Samaritans will maintain the minimum reserves level throughout 2025-26 whilst meeting all financial commitments.

Our outreach activities and fundraising are still not fully resourced and is an area to focus on in the coming year.

The Trustees and leadership team hope to be able to increase capacity within our existing building and are exploring this option.

Structure, governance and management

Structure

North Herts & Stevenage Samaritans became a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO), governed by constitution, on 22 June 2017. Trustees have a limit of six-year terms; except the Director, who serves a three-year term, which can be extended by up to 12 months by the approval of SCO's board of trustees.

The day-to-day operation of the activities of the Branch are controlled by the two Directors, with the support of Deputy Directors. The Directors are appointed by the Branch Committee, under the recommendation of a consensus of the members of the Branch and with approval from SCO.

The Trustee Committee is responsible for fundraising, the approval of expenditure, and the maintenance of the Branch premises and equipment. Committee members/Trustees are either elected or ex officio and serve as Trustees for a period of no more than six years. Ex-officio committee members are appointed or stand down at the Annual General Meeting each year.

The Trustees meet at least six times a year. Trustee meetings in the year have used Zoom or been in-person, in accordance with constitutional and legal requirements.

Recruitment of trustees

A team of three Co-Directors had been elected on an interim basis for 1 year and remained in post until 31 December 2024. It was felt that a team of Co-Directors was the perfect blend and 3 Co-Directors took over on 1st January 2025.

Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances one Director resigned in March 2025, however the remaining two Directors agreed to continue.

New Trustees are identified either through an open recruitment from the membership base, or by recommendation or selection for their skill and abilities. Appointments are subject to the approval of a quorum of members. On appointment, new Trustees are provided with the information recommended by the Charity Commission. They receive Samaritans-specific training, as well as access to general trustee training, as part of their induction.

Governance

Over the 12 months of this review, the trustees carried out regular reviews of Samaritans standard policies, as required by SCO, and were able to advise to SCO that we are adhering to central guidance regarding governance, finance, data protection, safeguarding and health and safety. We developed a fundraising strategy and reviewed our data protection and finance policies.

North Herts & Stevenage Samaritans does not employ professional fundraisers in any capacity, and no complaints regarding fundraising were received for the period of this review.

Statement of trustees' responsibilities

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Review and the accounts, in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom accounting standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice). The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the trustees to prepare accounts for each financial year that give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure for that period. In preparing these accounts, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- observe the principles in the Charities SORP.
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures that must be disclosed and explained in the accounts; and
- prepare the accounts on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Charity to enable them, as a matter of good practice, to ensure that the accounts comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP 2019) applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102). They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Reference and administration – 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025

North Herts & Stevenage Samaritans – registered charity number 1173578

The committee members who served as Trustees in the year were as follows:

Simon Couzens	Director	Appointed 5 January 2024, resigned 1 January 2025
David Bloomfield	Co-Director	Appointed 1 January 2025, resigned 18 March 2025
Jo Coxon	Co-Director	Appointed 1 January 2025.
Graham Sutton		Appointed 31 January 2020, re-appointed 23 September 2024
Alan Chaney		Appointed 3 Sept 2019, re-appointed 23 September 2024
Kate Adams	Secretary	Appointed 14 April 2021, re-appointed 23 September 2024
Tim Coulson		Appointed 14 April 2021, re-appointed 23 September 2024, resigned 4 June 2025
Karen Proctor		Appointed 28 November 2022, re-appointed 23 September 2024
Rachel Campbell		Appointed 28 November 2022, re-appointed 23 September 2024, resigned 27 February 2025
Emily Bryan	Treasurer	Appointed 16 September 2023, re-appointed 23 September 2024
Wendy Roberts	Co-Director	Appointed 1 January 2025.

2024–2025 Annual Review and Accounts

Charity bank account	Barclays Bank, Leicester, LE87 2BB
Independent examiner	Tara Aldwin ACA, FKCA Ltd, 260–270 Butterfield, Great Marlings, Luton, LU2 8DL (Appointed 16 September 2022)
Charity registered address	5 Nuns Close, Hitchin, Herts, SG5 1EP
Contact telephone number	01462 654517
Website	www.samaritans.org/branches/hitchin

The Trustees declare that they have approved the Trustees' Review up to and including page 11.

Signed on behalf of the Charity's Trustees:

Signed: J. Coxon (signature of authorised person)

Date: 3/11/25

Jo Coxon, Chair of Trustee Board (name and position of authorised person)

Signed: Emily Bryan (signature of authorised person)

Date: 02/11/2025

Emily Bryan, Treasurer (name and position of authorised person)

Independent examiner's report

to the trustees of North Herts & Stevenage Samaritans

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of North Herts and Stevenage Samaritans ('the charity') for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Respective responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Charity, 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 charity's accounts carried out under Section 145 of the 2011 Act; and in carrying out my examination I have followed the applicable directions given by the Charity Commissioners 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:

- accounting records were not kept in respect of the Charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with those records; or
- the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of the 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.

Tara Aldwin ACA
FKCA LIMITED
Chartered Accountants

260–270 Butterfield
Great Marlings
Luton
LU2 8DL

Date:.....

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 March 2025

Incoming resources from generated funds	Note	Fixed asset cover fund £	Designated general fund £	Restricted general fund £	Unrestricted general fund £	2024/25 Total funds £	2023/24 Total funds* £
Donations		-	-	-	11,525	11,525	16,152
Christmas cards		-	-	-	300	300	229
Interest income		-	-	-	2,633	2,633	2,811
Generated income, including from Friends of Samaritans		-	-	-	8,470	8,470	48,200
Grants income		-	-	800	11,020	11,820	18,416
Gift Aid		-	-	-	-	-	1,600
Total incoming resources from charitable activities		**-**	**-**	**800**	**33,948**	**34,748**	**87,408**
Costs of generating funds	2	-	-	-	5,705	5,705	10,826
Charitable activities	3	-	-	-	20,632	20,632	21,646
Support costs	4	-	4,488	-	9,979	14,467	13,602
Total resources expended		**-**	**4,488**	**-**	**36,316**	**40,804**	**46,074**
Net surplus/(deficit)		**-**	**(4,488)**	**800**	**(2,368)**	**(6,056)**	**41,334**
Loss on investment		-	-	-	(1,594)	(1,594)	(952)
Net movement in funds		**-**	**-**	**800**	**(3,962)**	**(7,650)**	**40,382**
Funds brought forward		**17,601**	**79,058**	**-**	**29,721**	**126,380**	**85,998**
Funds transfer		-	-	-	-	-	-
Funds carried forward		**17,601**	**74,570**	**800**	**25,759**	**118,730**	**126,380**

*All funds held and all fund movements during the comparative period were unrestricted funds.

Balance sheet at 31 MARCH 2025

		Note	31 Mar 2025	31 Mar 2024
			£	£
FIXED ASSETS				
	Tangible assets			
	Building renovation – cost		14,808	14,808
	Building renovation – accumulated depreciation		(14,808)	(14,808)
	Freehold property – cost		17,601	17,601
	Office equipment		23,062	19,193
	Less accumulated depreciation on office equipment		(17,549)	(16,276)
Total tangible assets		6	**23,114**	**20,518**
Fixed asset investment		7	70,895	69,856
Total fixed assets			**94,009**	**90,374**
CURRENT ASSETS				
	Cash at bank and in hand			
	Barclays Community Account 63678547		30,607	46,615
	Total cash at bank and in hand		**30,607**	**46,615**
	Stock		325	-
	Debtors	8	1,588	2,965
Total current assets			**32,520**	**49,580**
CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR				
	Accounts payable		1,422	5,560
	Accruals		6,377	8,014
Total creditors: amounts falling due within one year		9	**7,799**	**13,574**
	Net current assets		**24,721**	**36,006**
	Total assets less current liabilities		**118,730**	**126,380**
	Net assets		**118,730**	**126,380**
CAPITAL AND RESERVES				
	Designated funds		74,570	79,058
	Restricted funds		800	-
	Fixed asset cover fund		17,601	17,601
	General funds		25,759	29,721
Total capital and reserves			**118,730**	**126,380**

These financial statements were approved by the trustees on 2nd November 2025 and signed on their behalf by:

J. Coxon — Emily Bryan

(Jo Coxon, Chair of Trustees) (Emily Bryan, Treasurer)

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025

Accounting policies

(a) Basis of preparing the financial accounts

The financial accounts of the charitable company, 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 Standard102 'The Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Companies Act 2006. The Financial accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

The presentation currency of the financial accounts is the Pound Sterling (£)

The Charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

The charitable company is a company limited by guarantee and has no share capital

The Trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the Charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

(b) Voluntary income received by way of donations and gifts is included in the statement of financial activities (SOFA) when received. Gifts in kind are valued and brought in as income.

(c) Gross fund-raising income from events organised by the charity itself is included in the SOFA when received. Where deemed material, fund-raising proceeds not yet received by the charity at the year-end have also been taken to income at the trustees' estimate of likely receivable amount.

(d) Covenant, gift aid and other income received by the charity in respect of which a claim for payment of tax has or will be made is grossed up for the tax recoverable and the gross amount recognised in the SOFA.

(e) Income from legacies is included in the SOFA when received or when the trustees are satisfied the charity has a legally enforceable right of receipt of a conservatively measured sum.

(f) Revenue grants for immediate financial support and assistance are recognised in the SOFA on receipt and on satisfaction of pre-conditions.

(g) Net fund-raising income raised by Friends of North Herts & Stevenage Samaritans is recognised in the SOFA on receipt by the charity as part of the Friends overall contribution, and the associated fund-raising costs separately disclosed in a note.

(h) Premises overheads are aggregated and allocated to the various functional activities of the charity on a percentage basis determined by the trustees and disclosed in a note.

(I) Any costs which cannot be specifically identified to another functional activity of the charity are included in the management and administration function.

(j) Depreciation is provided on all tangible fixed assets of material value held by the charity for its own use on a straight-line basis so as to write off their cost over their estimated useful lives as follows:

Freehold property	Nil
Building renovation costs	20% p.a.
Office equipment and furniture	20% p.a.

(k) No provision for taxation is included in the accounts as the charity is entitled to the exemption from tax afforded by Section 505 of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988.

Accounting policies (continued)

(l) Funds held by the charity are either:

Unrestricted general funds – these are funds that can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the Trustees.

Designated funds – these are funds set aside by the Trustees out of unrestricted general funds for specific future purposes or projects.

Restricted funds – these are funds than 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.

	£	£	£	£	£
	2024/25 designated	2024/25 restricted	2024/25 unrestricted	2024/25 total	2023/24 total
1. PREMISES OVERHEADS					
Rates and water rates	-	-	347	347	311
Power and heat	-	-	2,462	2,462	2,197
Repairs and renewals	-	-	1,858	1,858	1,906
Cleaning and housekeeping	-	-	2,826	2,826	3,427
Equipment repairs and renewals	-	-	197	197	532
IT support	-	-	2,978	2,978	2,387
Office, telephone and postage	-	-	200	200	285
Insurance and legal costs	-	-	1,044	1,044	991
Operating lease fees	-	-	100	100	100
Total for the year	-	-	**12,012**	**12,012**	**12,136**
Allocated to:					
Cost of generating funds	-	-	1,202	1,202	1,214
Charitable activities	-	-	9,608	9,608	9,708
Governance costs	-	-	1,202	1,202	1,214
Total allocations for the year	-	-	**12,012**	**12,012**	**12,136**
2. COSTS OF GENERATING FUNDS					
Share of premises overheads (see detail 1)	-	-	1,202	1,202	1,214
Direct costs relating to fundraising activities	-	-	4,503	4,503	9,612
Total for the year	-	-	**5,705**	**5,705**	**10,826**
3. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES					
Support line telephone	-	-	1,442	1,442	1,666
Volunteer travel expenses	-	-	176	176	434
Volunteer training	-	-	625	625	209
Outreach	-	-	160	160	594
Prison visit costs	-	-	1,517	1,517	2,049
Conference fees	-	-	2,604	2,604	5,224
Contribution to SCO support costs	-	-	4,500	4,500	1,762
Total activities	-	-	**11,024**	**11,024**	**11,938**
Share of premises overheads (see detail 1)	-	-	9,608	9,608	9,708
Total for the year	-	-	**20,632**	**20,632**	**21,646**

	£	£	£	£	£
	2024/25 designated	2024/25 restricted	2024/25 unrestricted	2024/25 total	2023/24 total
4. SUPPORT COSTS					
Independent examiner's fee	-	-	1,795	1,795	1,744
Printing, stationery & photocopying	-	-	-	-	6
Professional fees	4,488	-	-	4,488	1,900
Depreciation expense	-	-	1,273	1,273	1,204
Gifts and sundry expenses	-	-	244	244	156
Salaries	-	-	5,005	5,005	6,348
Payroll processing fees	-	-	240	240	180
Meeting costs	-	-	220	220	850
Total activities	**4,488**	**-**	**8,777**	**13,265**	**12,388**
Share of premises overheads (see note 2)	-	-	1,202	1,202	1,214
Total for the year	**4,488**	**-**	**9,979**	**14,467**	**13,602**

	2024/25	2023/24
	£	£
5. STAFF COSTS		
Salaries	5,005	6,348

No employee received emoluments in excess of £60,000.

6. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

		Freehold property	Building renovation	Office equipment & furniture	Total
		£	£	£	£
Cost					
At 1 April 2024		17,601	14,808	19,193	51,602
Additions		-	-	3,869	3,869
Disposals		-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2025		**17,601**	**14,808**	**23,062**	**55,471**
Depreciation					
At 1 April 2024		-	14,808	16,276	31,084
Charge for the period		-	-	1,273	1,273
Disposals		-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2025		**-**	**14,808**	**17,549**	**32,357**
Net book value	31 March 2025	17,601	-	5,513	23,114
	31 March 2024	17,601	-	2,917	20,518

7. LISTED INVESTMENT FUNDS	Cost	Market value
	£	£
At 1 April 2024	48,148	69,856
Investment income	-	2,633
Change in market value	-	(1,594)
At 31 March 2025	**48,148**	**70,895**

8. DEBTORS	2024/25	2023/24
	£	£
Trade debtors	60	1,700
Prepayments and accrued income	1,020	1,608
Sundry debtors	508	-
Total debtors	**1,588**	**3,308**

9. CREDITORS	2024/25	2023/24
	£	£
Trade creditors	1,422	5,560
Accruals	6,376	8,014
Total creditors	**7,798**	**13,574**

10. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND EXPENSES

The Trustees received no remuneration in respect of the financial year ended 31 March 2025 (2024- £Nil). During the year, there was no reimbursed travel cost Nil (2024 - £65), postage and stationery £96 (2024 - £29), Cleaning and housekeeping £590 (2024 - £Nil) and meeting costs £20 (2024 - £73). It is the policy of the charity to reimburse in full all expenses properly incurred by its volunteers in connection with its charitable activities.

11. INDEMNITY INSURANCE

Samaritans has centrally affected professional indemnity insurance to protect employees, trustees, members of the charity's management committee and other volunteer members of all Samaritans branches.

12. DESIGNATED FUNDS

Fixed asset cover fund – represents funds designated to cover the cost of the charity's freehold property.
Designated general funds – represents funds designated for projects and improvements beyond normal annual expenditure.
Restricted funds - represents funds for renovation of the branch property.

13. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

There were no related party transactions for the year ended 31 March 2025

We're here to listen

Call free day or night on

116 123

Email
jo@samaritans.org

Web
samaritans.org/hitchin

Write to us
Freepost SAMARITANS LETTERS

SAMARITANS

Samaritans of North Herts and Stevenage is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered in England and Wales (1173578). Our registered office is located at 5 Nuns Close, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG5 1EP.

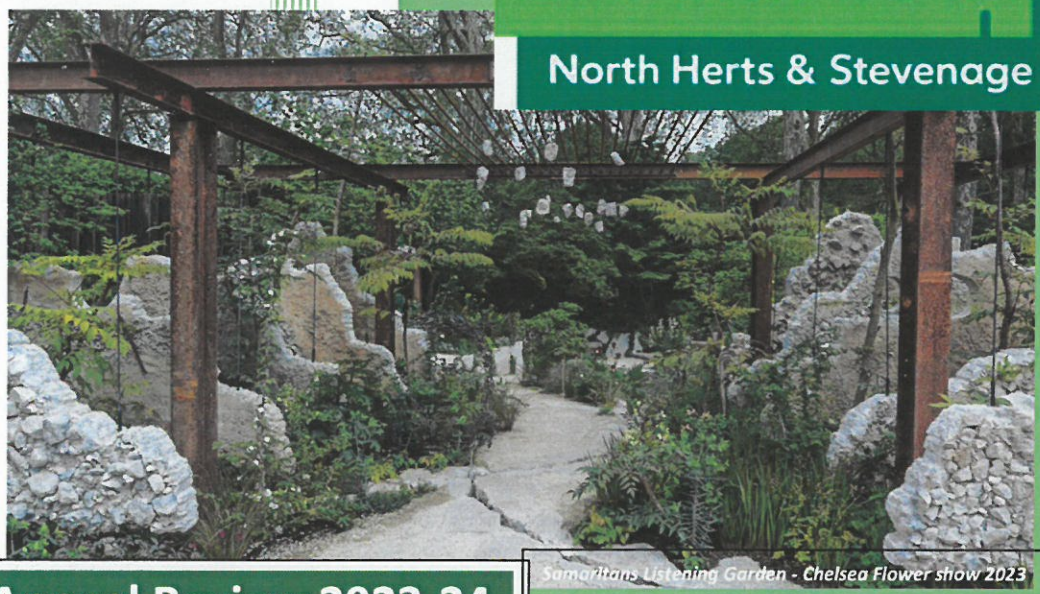
SAMARITANS OF NORTH HERTS & STEVENAGE

England & Wales - Charity number 1173578

Accounts

SAMARITANS
North Herts & Stevenage

SAMARITANS
North Herts & Stevenage



Samaritans Listening Garden - Chelsea Flower show 2023

Annual Review 2023-24

SAMARITANS

North Herts & Stevenage

Charity number 1173578

2023–2024 Annual review and accounts

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Director's message

I am pleased to introduce this annual review on North Herts & Stevenage Samaritans for the period of April 2023 to March 2024.

At the beginning of January 2024, Ilsa 383 stepped down after 3 years as Branch Director and we would like to express our heartfelt thanks for her dedicated service to our charity. During her time, Ilsa worked tirelessly to expertly manage all the different aspects of running the service: from recruitment, to training, mentoring, volunteer support, rota management, continuous development, premises, IT, outreach and fundraising.

The process to replace Ilsa ran in the last quarter of 2023 and no single person was found to take on the role. As an interim measure, we (Clare 502, Dani 272 and Simon 542) agreed to step in as interim co-directors for 9 months (later extended to 12 months) until the recruitment process could be run again.

We have been supported by a dedicated and capable team of deputy directors, trustees, support volunteers and the fantastic army of listening volunteers who give up their time to be there for callers, night and day, and we thank them all.

Our branch is lucky enough to have just one paid administrator for 10 hours per week. All the other 130 or so volunteers give their time, effort and energy free of charge.

In the summer of 2023, our branch hosted the Samaritans National Walk, bringing together volunteers from across the UK and ROI, raising the profile of our charity and raising over £7,800.

A local artist, Sarah Graham, is a great supporter of our service and she ran the 'Samarivans' project in the summer, whereby artists, celebrities and others painted a template provided by Sarah, to be auctioned in September, which raised a fantastic £38,842 for our branch.

A part of this money was used to pay for a record number of 32 volunteers to attend the annual regional conference in February 2024, helping to improve knowledge and maintain morale and volunteer retention.

For many years, we have been looking for premises that better suit our needs, but this has proved exceptionally difficult and in the first quarter of 2024, a strategy was agreed to:

1. Establish exactly what we are aiming for in terms of numbers of volunteers and hours on the phone;
2. Decide whether our premises can be adapted to accommodate the new target.

This will be one of our main focuses for the remaining time of our tenure, as one of the key messages that came out of the director selection process last time, was that volunteers want certainty over this important issue, and this is what we are particularly keen to achieve.

As we write this there has already been progress on the building redevelopment plan and we have had a good start to the 2024/25 year with Samaritans being the official charity of the TCS London Marathon. This branch was particularly excited to have arranged for the Tower of London to be lit up in green for the weekend of the event. New Director selection is about to get underway as well and so we are optimistic about the strength and continuity of our branch in North Hertfordshire.

With the fantastic support of our volunteers, we are well equipped to continue and expand our service, and pursue our aim that fewer people die by suicide.



Simon 542

Co-branch Director and Chair of Trustees

North Herts & Stevenage Samaritans

About Samaritans

Samaritans provides non-judgemental emotional support, 24 hours a day, for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those that could lead to suicide. We offer our service by telephone, email, letter and face to face, from our branches and at hospitals, schools, prisons, workplaces and festivals, through a network of over 200 branches in the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

From its base in Hitchin, North Herts & Stevenage Samaritans is a charity operating as a branch of Samaritans. Whilst supporting the residents of the surrounding area, it also supports the residents of the whole of the UK and ROI via the Samaritans central calls system.

Our vision

Our vision is that fewer people die by suicide.

To achieve this, we believe Samaritans has a crucial role to play in:

- Reducing the risk factors that make some people more likely to take their own lives;
- Ensuring that people who are at increased risk of suicide are supported;
- Making it less likely that people who do experience suicidal thoughts act on them; and
- Reducing the likelihood that people will develop suicidal thoughts.

Our mission

We're here every day and night of the year for anyone struggling to cope. We make sure people have somewhere to turn and support when they need it most. We work with communities to let people know we're here for them and we campaign to make suicide prevention a priority.

Our values

Our support services adapt to the changing environment, but the values at the core of our listening service remain constant:

- **Listening** – Exploring feelings alleviates distress and helps people to reach a better understanding of their situation and the options open to them.
- **Confidentiality** – If people feel safe, they are more likely to be open about their feelings.
- **Non-judgemental** – We want people to be able to talk to us without fear of prejudice or rejection.
- **People making their own decisions** – We believe that people have the right to find their own solutions and that telling people what to do takes responsibility away from them.
- **Human contact** – Giving people time, undivided attention and empathy meets a fundamental emotional need, and reduces distress and despair.

Fundraising

Fundraising, collections and donations

We were able to hold 7 collections during the year across the region: at Tesco stores (in Baldock, Stevenage and Royston), Hitchin railway station (Brew Monday), the Radcliffe Arms Hitchin (quiz night), a Sarah Millican gig at Stevenage and the Hitchin Historical Society Christmas raffle. We are hoping to grow the team of volunteers that help with collections to enable more to take place.

Several local businesses retain collecting cans for customers to donate to us and for the 2023/24 year they were: Biggleswade Station Book library, Brickyard, (Bancroft, Hitchin), Doghouse Grooming (Arlesey), Hair by Talents (Hitchin), Toni & Guy (Hitchin).

Two major fundraising events also took place in the year: the Samaritans 44th Annual National Walk and Samarivans, both of which are reported on below.

In general, we are seeing an increased use of charity platforms for donations and envisage this will continue to be an important way for us to raise money for the branch.

The value of local support cannot be expressed sufficiently, but we would like to acknowledge this on behalf of all our volunteers and the people that benefit from the service we provide. A few of the organisations that contributed are listed below.

- Arkley Fine Art, Hitchin
- Benevity-Tenable
- Brakes (Adam Collett)
- Branch Bookers Snack, Luton
- Drink Biggleswade
- Hitchin Girls School
- Gravenchurch Methodist Church
- John Laing Charitable Trust
- Lions Letchworth & Baldock
- New Vantage Consulting
- LALG History Group in memory of Barbara Hobbs
- Lions Letchworth & Baldock
- New Vantage Consulting
- NFU Mutual
- Norgans Pretty Decent Beer
- Pirton Thursday Ladies Group
- Phillips Digital Print, Letchworth
- Rotary Club of Hitchin
- Sainsbury, Hitchin
- Satchells Estate Agents, Hitchin
- Stories Matter
- Tilehouse Street Baptist Church in memory of Tony Bliss
- Toni & Guy, Hitchin
- Trinity Church Knebworth
- The Priory School year 13 students
- TPS Visual Communications, Letchworth Garden City
- Waitrose, Hitchin

Thanks also to those who are taking a few extra seconds when ordering shopping on the internet to enable the branch to receive a contribution from many retailers. To do this, you can use **Easyfundraising**, www.easyfundraising.org.uk.

Web users have also donated via searching online for North Herts & Stevenage Samaritans.

Thanks to everyone for your loyal support, which has enabled our branch to remain fully operational

National Walk

On Saturday July 1st 2023, Samaritans of North Herts & Stevenage hosted the 44th National Walk, also marking the 70th year of Samaritans. On the day we had 150 walkers from across the country completing one of 3 walks of 5, 13 or 20 miles. As clouds lifted, we were blessed with ideal conditions for the walk and the evening event which followed. This was also very well attended with nearly 100 people staying (or coming) for pizza from a pizza

van, cakes, the raffle draw, live music and a rock choir.

Thanks to all those from the Branch and their families who helped with the planning, preparation, and on the day itself and with the tidy up after. It was a massive effort from all connected with the branch as well as many family members and friends.

Several local businesses also donated and supported us and are recognised above and the event raised £7,804.89 for the branch.

Samarivans

Local artist Sarah Graham encouraged a host of famous names, as well as people from the North Hertfordshire community and beyond, to design their own 'Samarivans' using camper van stencils she had designed.

Contributors included artists Tom Hovey (Great British Bake Off), Hayden Kays and Pete McKee, as well as celebrities Joe Lycett, Keith Lemon, Jodie Whittaker, Ricky Wilson, Timmy Mallett, Su Pollard, Eddie the Eagle and West End and Broadway star Kerry Ellis.

The finished products were displayed at Arkley Fine Art in Hitchin and an Ebay auction held.

Thank you to Sarah and her partner David for their fantastic efforts and to all the artists who contributed their work and the people who purchased them as well as those who made donations. After costs, over £38,800 was raised - a huge contribution to our branch income for the year. We cannot sufficiently express our gratitude for all Sarah and David did to support us. You can read what Sarah has to say about it here.

Grants

We were very fortunate to continue to receive unrestricted grants from POhWER until August 2023, and we have subsequently received a new unrestricted grant from Hertfordshire County Council. Both of these will help enable us to continue to cover our operating costs and continue to offer vital services to those in need of them.

Supporters

We are very grateful to all the individuals and organisations that help us to carry out the work we do, whether it be through helping with collections, sponsorship and donations, or regular giving.

Donating

If you would like to help us, you can make a donation:

By bank transfer

Account name: North Herts & Stevenage Samaritans
Account number: 63678547
Sort code: 20-05-73
Please quote your name as reference.

By cheque

Please make your cheque payable to 'North Herts & Stevenage Samaritans' and send it to our branch address: 5 Nuns Close, Hitchin, SG5 1EP.

By text message

Text SAMSLOCAL 3 to 70460 to donate £3.

Texts cost £3 plus one standard rate message and you'll be opting in to hear more about our work and fundraising via telephone and SMS. If you'd like to give £3 but do not wish to receive marketing communications, text SAMSLOCALNOINFO 3 to 70460.

Caller support

In the year to 31 March 2024, our dedicated volunteers have taken over 20,000 calls, spending around 6,000 hours on the phone as well as responding to online chat requests at a rate of over 65 a month.

As always, we are infinitely grateful to our listening volunteers, each of whom devotes at least four hours per week listening to our callers, including on overnight shifts, when the need is particularly acute.

External relations

Outreach and talks

As a branch we enjoyed being able to take the Samaritans message out into the community and this year we were able to visit various locations in our area. In August we attended the Royston Kite Festival, always a large family event, and we were pleased to be there for the first time. In September we had an information stall at the Older Peoples Activity and Learning Support (OPALS) day in Hitchin. We gave out key rings, cards and spoke with many of the attendees.

As part of Suicide Prevention, we had a stall at Stevenage during the "Festival of Hope Day" in September. Various professionals and representatives (including Samaritans Central Office) gave presentations in the morning. In the afternoon, local organisations set up stalls along the walkway between the Railway Station and the Town Centre providing an excellent opportunity to meet with other groups and the public.

On a busy match day in October, we were invited to Stevenage Football Club to support World Mental Health Day using the Real People Real Stories theme. A member of our Branch was interviewed at half time in front of 5,000 people: the largest audience that we have addressed as a branch. Before the match, 5 of our volunteers spoke to supporters and gave out Samaritans-branded "freebies" provided by Central Office.

In December we provided a Samaritans Tree in Hitchin for the Holy Saviour Christmas Tree Festival. In January 2024 we held a very successful Brew Monday event at Hitchin Railway station. We had 8 volunteers present from 06.45 to 10.30 engaging with many passengers and the event was well supported by Great Northern, BT Police and Network Rail staff.

Throughout the year we continued with our monthly awareness stall at the Lister Hospital in Stevenage.

Prisons

Prisoners are an extremely vulnerable group, and the incidence of suicide and self-harm in prisons generally is on the increase. Prisons can be lonely, stressful, intimidating and scary places for some inmates, who need emotional support to get through their time inside. Many callers from prisons suffer with poor mental health.

Samaritans work in conjunction with the safer custody teams in most prisons in the UK. Inmates can seek support from Samaritans, using the free-to-use Samaritans phones as well as a free, confidential correspondence service. Some prisons now provide phones in individual prisoner cells, but these can only access certain selected numbers like close family and Samaritans.

Understandably, some prisoners prefer to speak to others who they see are in the same situation as themselves, which is why we carefully select and train prisoners to be Listeners. They then provide emotional support to other prisoners without financial reward or benefits. What they do get is some satisfaction that they are supporting others who are going through mental turmoil. Listeners are dedicated in what they do and get called out any time of the day or night.

Together with colleagues from the Samaritans Cambridge branch, some of our volunteers regularly visit Littlehey Prison in Cambridgeshire. We support the Listener team, helping them do their job as well as promoting the work we do jointly with them to both prisoners and prison staff.

Recruitment, training and mentoring

In the year of report, we continued to conduct information evenings and interviews in person. Recruitment in the year has maintained volunteer numbers, and applications via the central application system have been steady and not given any cause for concern.

During the 2023–24 financial year, 30 new volunteers progressed through our initial (CORE) training which ran four times in the year. This involves six weeks of intensive training and homework, including online modules, which make up our 'Core' training. After some weeks of mentored shifts, those new volunteers regroup to complete three weeks of 'Embedding' training, which includes discussions around calls they have taken and their experiences on initial shifts.

Each new volunteer spends a period of time with a dedicated mentor to complete their training. During 2023-2024 the mentor co-ordinator updated the material available to both mentors and mentees and strengthened the mentor team to 35 people (either as a primary or secondary mentor). Together the mentor group supported 24 trainees in the period June 2023 to March 2024, 12 of whom are now fully trained listening volunteers with 6 more due to become full volunteers shortly. This year we will be implementing further best practices from other branches to ensure volunteers are even better supported in the early months of listening, including the recruitment and training of new mentors, providing some guidelines on offloading on night shifts for mentors and mentees, and continuing support for mentees/freelancers after embedding. We will also increase the support available to mentors.

In the final quarter of the year significant changes were required to the CORE training team, with two of the lead trainers taking on the role of co-director and so having to step back from their training responsibilities. The lead for ongoing training has also now stepped down. Combined with other changes in volunteer availability this has necessitated the need to create a completely new team. The challenges continue into the 2024-25 year but several volunteers are being trained to support both CORE and ongoing training.

We anticipate increasing our recruitment capacity towards the end of the 2024-25 year with the goal of growing volunteer numbers to allow 3-person shifts.

Volunteer support

We continue to try to and send as many volunteers as possible to the Samaritans Eastern Regional Conference. The feedback from those that attend is always overwhelmingly positive and provides the best networking opportunity to share best practice with our own branch of Samaritans and with other branches in the region. This year 32 volunteers attended.

Financial review

Overall

The charity's financial activities are shown on page 13 of this report.

The net income for the year was £41,334 (2023: £6,206 net expenditure) comprising total income of £87,408 (2023: £26,060) and total expenditure of £46,074 (2023: £32,266).

The increase in income was driven primarily by two substantial fundraising events during the year: the National Walk and Samarivans. These events raised significant funds and also brought substantial positive exposure to the charity which in turn resulted in an increase in donations from the general public.

The increase in expenditure was driven largely by the cost of generating funds of £10,826 (2023: £1,098) which enabled the fundraising events to take place, and also an increase in support costs from £6,712 in the prior year to £13,602 in the current year. Expenditure on charitable activities of £21,646 (2023: £24,456) includes the contribution to SCO support costs of £1,762 (2023: £7,550).

The statement of financial position shows the funds of the charity which primarily comprise fixed assets, fixed asset investments and cash at bank. Interest received from fixed asset investments of £2,811 (2023: £2,087) was in line with expectations and the gradual stabilisation of the bond market resulted in a marginal fair value loss of £952 (2023: £11,005).

The total fund balance as at 31 March 2024 was £126,380 (2023: £85,998), with £108,779 of this (2023: £68,397) representing general funds, made up of both designated and undesignated portions. In line with the reserves policy and in recognition of continued plans to refurbish the existing property held by the charity and which serves as the operational base for the branch, the trustees authorised a transfer of reserves from the undesignated fund to the designated fund of £25,000. The closing balance on the undesignated and designated funds are £79,058 (2023: £54,058) and £29,721 (2023: £14,339) respectively. The designated fund continues to be held for the purposes of property refurbishment.

The title to the current freehold premises is held by Samaritans as custodian trustee and the charity, subject to a trust deed in respect of its premises.

Reserves

The Trustees reviewed the Financial Reserves Policy in the year since the last review, and confirmed the continued policy of holding a minimum level of six months and a maximum of 18 months of undesignated reserves, to allow the Branch to continue operating without financial income for that period without releasing long-term reserves or requiring assistance from SCO. This has been monitored on a regular basis. The trustees will continue to review the reserves policy on an annual basis. In the period from March 2024, the Trustees have taken full account of the Charity Commission advice on the use of reserves. Cash flow projections indicate that North Herts & Stevenage Samaritans will end the financial year (2024-25) with unrestricted funds above the minimum reserves level.

Risk management

The trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed. At their meetings, they carry out this duty and ensure appropriate controls are in place and any necessary action is taken to mitigate such risks. The risk register is reviewed regularly by trustees at, or outside of, their meetings.

We operate outreach activities under guidance provided by SCO and risk assessments are completed for all such activities.

Future plans

Cash flow estimates indicate that North Herts & Stevenage Samaritans will maintain the minimum reserves level throughout 2024-25 whilst meeting all financial commitments.

Our outreach activities and fundraising are still not fully resourced and is an area to focus on in the coming year.

The trustees and leadership team hope to be able to increase capacity within our existing building and are exploring this option.

Structure, governance and management

Structure

North Herts & Stevenage Samaritans became a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO), governed by constitution, on 22 June 2017. Trustees have a limit of six-year terms; except the Director, who serves a three-year term, which can be extended by up to 12 months by the approval of SCO's board of trustees.

The day-to-day operation of the activities of the Branch are controlled by the Director, with the support of Deputy Directors. The Director is appointed by the Branch Committee, under the recommendation of a consensus of the members of the Branch and with approval from SCO.

The Trustee Committee is responsible for fundraising, the approval of expenditure, and the maintenance of the Branch premises and equipment. Committee members/Trustees are either elected or ex officio and serve as Trustees for a period of no more than six years. Ex-officio committee members are appointed or stand down at the Annual General Meeting each year.

The Trustees meet at least six times a year. Trustee meetings in the year have used Zoom or been in-person, in accordance with constitutional and legal requirements.

Recruitment of trustees

Ilsa Hawtin was Branch Director and Chair of Trustees until 5 January 2024. A team of three Co-Directors was elected on an interim basis after that and remain in post until 31 December 2024. Only one, Simon Couzens, sits of the Board of Trustees. He was co-opted to the Board of Trustees in December 2023 to allow for a smooth handover of responsibility.

New Trustees are identified either through an open recruitment from the membership base, or by recommendation or selection for their skill and abilities. Appointments are subject to the approval of a quorum of members. On appointment, new Trustees are provided with the information recommended by the Charity Commission. They receive Samaritans-specific training, as well as access to general trustee training, as part of their induction.

An additional Trustee was appointed as Treasurer at an AGM in September 2023 to strengthen the skill set of the existing Board and allow the previous Treasurer to take on other responsibilities. Full handover was possible to ensure a smooth transition.

Governance

Over the 12 months of this review, the trustees carried out regular reviews of Samaritans standard policies, as required by SCO, and were able to advise to SCO that we are adhering to central guidance regarding governance, finance, data protection, safeguarding and health and safety. We developed a fundraising strategy and reviewed our data protection and finance policies.

North Herts & Stevenage Samaritans does not employ professional fundraisers in any capacity, and no complaints regarding fundraising were received for the period of this review.

Statement of trustees' responsibilities

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Review and the accounts, in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom accounting standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice). The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the trustees to prepare accounts for each financial year that give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure for that period. In preparing these accounts, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures that must be disclosed and explianed in the accounts; and
- prepare the accounts on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Charity to enable them, as a matter of good practice, to ensure that the accounts comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP 2019) applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102). They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Reference and administration – 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

North Herts & Stevenage Samaritans – registered charity number 1173578

The committee members who served as Trustees in the year were as follows:

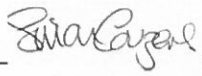
Ilsa Hawtin	Director	Appointed 1 January 2021, resigned 5 January 2024
Simon Couzens	Director	Co-opted 6 Dec 2023, appointed 5 January 2024
Graham Sutton		Appointed 31 January 2020, re-appointed 16 September 2023
Alan Chaney		Appointed 3 Sept 2019, re-appointed 16 September 2023
Kate Adams	Secretary	Appointed 14 April 2021, re-appointed 16 September 2023
Tim Coulson		Appointed 14 April 2021, re-appointed 16 September 2023
Karen Proctor		Appointed 28 November 2022, re-appointed 16 September 2023
Rachel Campbell		Appointed 28 November 2022, re-appointed 16 September 2023
Emily Bryan	Treasurer	Appointed 16 September 2023

2023–2024 Annual Review and Accounts

Charity bank account	Barclays Bank, Leicester, LE87 2BB
Independent examiner	Tara Aldwin ACA, FKCA Ltd, 260–270 Butterfield, Great Marlings, Luton, LU2 8DL (Appointed 16 September 2022)
Charity registered address	5 Nuns Close, Hitchin, Herts, SG5 1EP
Contact telephone number	01462 654517
Website	www.samaritans.org/branches/hitchin

The Trustees declare that they have approved the Trustees' Review up to and including page 12.

Signed on behalf of the Charity's Trustees:

Signed:_____  ____ (signature of authorised person)

Date: 16 Sept 2024

Simon Couzens, chair of trustee board (name and position of authorised person)

Signed: _  (signature of authorised person)

Date: 16 Sept 2024

Emily Bryan, treasurer (name and position of authorised person)

Independent examiner's report

to the trustees of North Herts & Stevenage Samaritans

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of North Herts and Stevenage Samaritans ('the charity') for the year ended 31 March 2024.

Respective responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Charity, 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 charity's accounts carried out under Section 145 of the 2011 Act; and in carrying out my examination I have followed the applicable directions given by the Charity Commissioners 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:

- accounting records were not kept in respect of the Charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with those; or
- the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of the 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.



Tara Aldwin ACA
FKCA LIMITED
Chartered Accountants

260–270 Butterfield
Great Marlings
Luton
LU2 8DL

Date: 24 September 2024

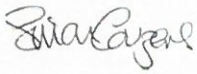
Financial accounts and notes for the year ended 31 March 2024

	Note	Fixed asset cover fund £	Designated general fund £	Unrestricted general fund £	2023/24 Total funds £	2022/23 Total funds £
Incoming resources from generated funds						
Donations		-	-	16,152	16,152	8,635
Christmas cards		-	-	229	229	101
Interest income		-	-	2,811	2,811	2,087
Generated income, including from Friends of Samaritans		-	-	48,200	48,200	5,712
Grants income		-	-	18,416	18,416	9,297
Gift Aid		-	-	1,600	1,600	228
Total incoming resources from charitable activities		**-**	**-**	**87,408**	**87,408**	**26,060**
Costs of generating funds	2	-	-	10,826	10,826	1,098
Charitable activities	3	-	-	21,646	21,646	24,456
Support costs	4	-	-	13,602	13,602	6,712
Total resources expended		**-**	**-**	**46,074**	**46,074**	**32,266**
Net surplus/(deficit)		-	-	41,334	41,334	**(6,206)**
Loss on investment		-	-	(952)	(952)	(11,005)
Net movement in funds		-	-	40,382	40,382	**(17,211)**
Funds brought forward		**17,601**	**54,058**	**14,339**	**85,998**	**103,209**
Funds transfer	12	-	25,000	(25,000)	-	-
Funds carried forward		**17,601**	**79,058**	**29,721**	**126,380**	**85,998**

Balance sheet at 31 MARCH 2024

		Note	31 Mar 2024	31 Mar 2023
			£	£
FIXED ASSETS				
	Tangible assets			
	Building renovation – cost		14,808	14,808
	Building renovation – accumulated depreciation		(14,808)	(14,808)
	Freehold property – cost		17,601	17,601
	Office equipment		19,193	19,193
	Less accumulated depreciation on office equipment		(16,276)	(15,072)
Total tangible assets		6	**20,518**	**21,722**
Fixed asset investment		7	69,856	67,997
Total fixed assets			**90,374**	89,719
CURRENT ASSETS				
	Cash at bank and in hand			
	Barclays Community Account 63678547		46,615	5,459
	Total cash at bank and in hand		**46,615**	**5,459**
	Accounts receivable		-	1,700
	Prepayments	8	2,965	1,608
	Sundry debtors		-	-
Total current assets			**49,580**	**8,767**
CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR				
	Accounts payable		5,560	-
	Accruals		8,014	12,488
Total creditors: amounts falling due within one year		9	**13,574**	**12,488**
	Net current assets/(liabilities)		**36,006**	**(3,721)**
	Total assets less current liabilities		**126,380**	**85,998**
	Net assets		**126,380**	**85,998**
CAPITAL AND RESERVES				
	Designated funds		79,058	54,058
	Fixed asset cover fund		17,601	17,601
	General funds		29,721	14,339
Total capital and reserves			**126,380**	**85,998**

These financial statements were approved by the trustees on 15 Sept 2024 and signed on their behalf by:





(Simon Couzens, chair of trustees) (Emily Bryan, treasurer)

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024

Accounting policies

(a) These accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention as modified by the revaluation of investments to market value and in accordance with applicable accounting standards and the Statement of Recommended Practice on Accounting by Charities ('Charities SORP'), (effective 1 January 2019).

(b) Voluntary income received by way of donations and gifts is included in the statement of financial activities (SOFA) when received. Gifts in kind are valued and brought in as income.

(c) Gross fund-raising income from events organised by the charity itself is included in the SOFA when received. Where deemed material, fund-raising proceeds not yet received by the charity at the year-end have also been taken to income at the trustees' estimate of likely receivable amount.

(d) Covenant, gift aid and other income received by the charity in respect of which a claim for payment of tax has or will be made is grossed up for the tax recoverable and the gross amount recognised in the SOFA.

(e) Income from legacies is included in the SOFA when received or when the trustees are satisfied the charity has a legally enforceable right of receipt of a conservatively measured sum.

(f) Revenue grants for immediate financial support and assistance are recognised in the SOFA on receipt and on satisfaction of pre-conditions.

(g) Net fund-raising income raised by Friends of North Herts & Stevenage Samaritans is recognised in the SOFA on receipt by the charity as part of the Friends overall contribution, and the associated fund-raising costs separately disclosed in a note.

(h) Premises overheads are aggregated and allocated to the various functional activities of the charity on a percentage basis determined by the trustees and disclosed in a note.

(I) Any costs which cannot be specifically identified to another functional activity of the charity are included in the management and administration function.

(j) Depreciation is provided on all tangible fixed assets of material value held by the charity for its own use on a straight-line basis so as to write off their cost over their estimated useful lives as follows:

Freehold property	Nil
Building renovation costs	20% p.a.
Office equipment and furniture	20% p.a.

(k) No provision for taxation is included in the accounts as the charity is entitled to the exemption from tax afforded by Section 505 of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988.

(l) Funds held by the charity are either:

Unrestricted general funds – these are funds that can be used in accordance with the charitable objects at the discretion of the trustees.

Designated funds – these are funds set aside by the trustees out of unrestricted general funds for specific future purposes or projects.

Restricted funds – these are funds than 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

	£	£	£	£
	2023/24 designated	2023/24 unrestricted	2023/24 total	2022/23 total
1. PREMISES OVERHEADS				
Rates and water rates	-	311	311	316
Power and heat	-	2,197	2,197	2,498
Repairs and renewals	-	1,906	1,906	1,238
Cleaning and housekeeping	-	3,427	3,427	2,713
Equipment repairs and replacements	-	532	532	444
IT Support	-	2,387	2,387	2,316
Office telephone and postage	-	285	285	351
Insurance and legal costs	-	991	991	997
Operating lease fees	-	100	100	100
Total for the year	-	**12,136**	**12,136**	**10,973**
Allocated to:				
Costs of generating funds	-	1,214	1,214	1,098
Charitable activities	-	9,708	9,708	8,777
Support costs	-	1,214	1,214	1,098
Total allocations for the year	-	**12,136**	**12,136**	**10,973**
2. COSTS OF GENERATING FUNDS				
Share of premises overheads (see detail 1)	-	1,214	1,214	1,098
Direct costs relating to fundraising activities	-	9,612	9,612	-
Total for the year	-	**10,826**	**10,826**	**1,098**
3. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES				
Support line telephone	-	1,666	1,666	1,788
Volunteer travel expenses	-	434	434	307
Volunteer training	-	209	209	408
Outreach	-	594	594	136
Prison visit costs	-	2,049	2,049	836
Conference fees	-	5,224	5,224	4,654
Contribution to SCO support costs	-	1,762	1,762	7,550
Total activities	-	**11,938**	**11,938**	**15,679**
Share of premises overheads (see detail 1)	-	9,708	9,708	8,777
Total for the year	-	**21,646**	**21,646**	**24,456**

	£	£	£	£
	2023/24 designated	2023/24 unrestricted	2023/24 total	2022/23 total
4. SUPPORT COSTS				
Governance costs - Independent examiner's fee	-	1,744	1,744	1,764
Printing, stationery & photocopying	-	6	6	83
Professional fees	-	1,900	1,900	-
Depreciation expense	-	1,204	1,204	1,204
Gifts and sundry expenses	-	156	156	-
Salaries	-	6,348	6,348	2,244
Payroll processing fees	-	180	180	110
Meeting costs	-	850	850	209
Total activities	-	**12,388**	**12,388**	**5,614**
Share of premises overheads (see note 2)	-	1,214	1,214	1,098
Total for the year	-	**13,602**	**13,602**	**6,712**

	2023/24	2022/23
	£	£
5. STAFF COSTS		
Salaries	6,348	2,244

No employee received emoluments in excess of £60,000.

6. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

		Freehold property	Building renovation	Office equipment & furniture	Total
		£	£	£	£
Cost					
At 1 April 2023		17,601	14,808	19,193	51,602
Additions		-	-	-	-
Disposals		-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2024		**17,601**	**14,808**	**19,193**	**51,602**
Depreciation					
At 1 April 2023		-	14,808	15,072	29,880
Charge for the period		-	-	1,204	1,204
Disposals		-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2024		**-**	**14,808**	**16,276**	**31,084**
Net book value	31 March 2024	17,601	-	2,917	20,518
	31 March 2023	17,601	-	4,121	21,722

7. LISTED INVESTMENT FUNDS	Cost	Market value
	£	£
At 1 April 2023	48,148	67,997
Investment income	-	2,811
Change in market value	-	(952)
At 31 March 2024	**48,148**	**69,856**

8. DEBTORS	2023/24	2022/23
	£	£
Trade debtors	-	1,700
Prepayments	2,965	1,608
Total debtors	**2,965**	**3,308**

9. CREDITORS	2023/24	2022/23
	£	£
Trade creditors	5,560	-
Accruals	8,014	12,488
Total creditors	**13,574**	**12,488**

10. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND EXPENSES

The Trustees received no remuneration in respect of the financial year ended 31 March 2024 (2023- £Nil). During the year, one trustee was reimbursed travel cost £65 (2023 - £156), Postage and stationery £29 (2023 - £Nil) and Meeting costs £73 (2023 - £Nil). It is the policy of the charity to reimburse in full all expenses properly incurred by its volunteers in connection with its charitable activities.

11. INDEMNITY INSURANCE

Samaritans has centrally affected professional indemnity insurance to protect employees, trustees, members of the charity's management committee and other volunteer members of all Samaritans branches.

12. DESIGNATED FUNDS

Fixed asset cover fund – represents funds designated to cover the cost of the charity's freehold property.
Designated general funds – represents funds designated for projects and improvements beyond normal annual expenditure. On 6th March 2024, the Trustees authorised a transfer of reserves totalling £25,000 between the General Fund and the Designated Fund.

We're here to listen

Call free day or night on

116 123

Email
jo@samaritans.org

Web
samaritans.org/hitchin

Write to us
Freepost SAMARITANS LETTERS

SAMARITANS

Samaritans of North Herts and Stevenage is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered in England and Wales (1173578). Our registered office is located at 5 Nuns Close, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG5 1EP.

SAMARITANS OF NORTH HERTS & STEVENAGE

England & Wales - Charity number 1173578

Accounts

SAMARITANS

North Herts & Stevenage



Annual Review 2022–23

SAMARITANS

North Herts & Stevenage

Charity number 1173578

2022–2023 Annual review and accounts

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Director's message

I am pleased to introduce this annual review on North Herts & Stevenage Samaritans for the period of April 2022 to March 2023.

The fundraising summary on pages 4–5 highlights our continual drive to remain in operation, with all of our fundraising organised and/or completed by our volunteers. A large proportion of our funds come from local organisations and individuals. We remain extremely grateful to all of our financial benefactors, who enable us to continue our work in supporting people experiencing emotional distress and/or suicidal feelings.

I am constantly reminded of the high level of support and time commitment provided by the volunteers at our branch. This is evidenced by our rota, in the time contributed by each of our listening volunteers on weekly daytime and overnight shifts; by the ever-increasing levels of interaction we achieve with our local community, through outreach events, prison support, talks and other awareness-sharing and fundraising activities; and by the countless additional tasks and duties fulfilled by our volunteers in keeping our branch running and enabling the service we provide to callers.

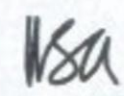
The reports from our operations teams, on pages 6–9, give some insight into the work of our volunteers, in addition to the support they give to our callers by telephone and online chat.

Pivotal to all of this is the support we provide to our own volunteers, to ensure they feel valued, motivated and emotionally supported. Our trustees therefore voted unanimously to fund volunteers' places at the Samaritans Eastern Regional Conference in February 2023, for which attendees give up an additional weekend of their personal time. We received £3,100 in grants, from local councillors and Herts Community Foundation, which enabled a record number of 28 volunteers from our branch to attend the conference. All attendees gave excellent feedback on the training, networking and social aspects of the weekend. Most reported higher levels of motivation and connection with Samaritans work after the conference, and many have since taken up additional volunteering duties.

At the time of writing, preparations are underway for the 44th Samaritans National Walk, which our branch is hosting for the first time on 1 July 2023. As well as a joyous day, bringing together volunteers and their families from across the UK and ROI, the National Walk will raise awareness of North Herts & Stevenage Samaritans as well as much-needed funds.

We welcomed 27 new volunteers to our branch in this financial year, all of whom received the intensive Samaritans Core training, delivered by our 12-person training team. We thereby continue to increase the support we provide, hampered only by physical space. Our branch is no longer large enough for us to maximise our volunteer capacity, and we are unable to make it DDA-compliant, so we have continued our efforts throughout this financial year to find a new, fit-for-purpose premises.

All of our fundraising and operational efforts simply wouldn't be possible without our branch leadership team of deputy directors and trustees. They have supported me in my role, while taking on the growing number of tasks required to maintain and expand on the essential service we provide to our callers.



Ilsa 383

Branch director and chair of trustees

North Herts & Stevenage Samaritans

About Samaritans

Samaritans provides non-judgemental emotional support, 24 hours a day, for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those that could lead to suicide. We offer our service by telephone, email, letter and face to face, from our branches and at hospitals, schools, prisons, workplaces and festivals, through a network of 201 branches in the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

From its base in Hitchin, North Herts & Stevenage Samaritans is a charity operating as a branch of Samaritans. Whilst supporting the residents of the surrounding area, it also supports the residents of the whole of the UK and ROI via the Samaritans central calls system.

Our vision

Our vision is that fewer people die by suicide.

To achieve this, we believe Samaritans has a crucial role to play in:

- Reducing the risk factors that make some people more likely to take their own lives.
- Ensuring that people who are at increased risk of suicide are supported.
- Making it less likely that people who do experience suicidal thoughts act on them.
- Reducing the likelihood that people will develop suicidal thoughts.

Our mission

We're here every day and night of the year for anyone struggling to cope. We make sure people have somewhere to turn and support when they need it most. We work with communities to let people know we're here for them and we campaign to make suicide prevention a priority.

Our values

Our support services adapt to the changing environment, but the values at the core of our listening service remain constant:

- **Listening** – Exploring feelings alleviates distress and helps people to reach a better understanding of their situation and the options open to them.
- **Confidentiality** – If people feel safe, they are more likely to be open about their feelings.
- **Non-judgemental** – We want people to be able to talk to us without fear of prejudice or rejection.
- **People making their own decisions** – We believe that people have the right to find their own solutions and that telling people what to do takes responsibility away from them.
- **Human contact** – Giving people time, undivided attention and empathy meets a fundamental emotional need, and reduces distress and despair.

Fundraising

Fundraising, collections and donations

Fundraising activities have resumed without restrictions in the year 2022–23, and we are greatly encouraged by both donations and the gratitude expressed by the public for the support Samaritans provide. We carried out collections on 11 occasions at supermarkets, town centres and railway stations and had collection cans in several local businesses, raising over £800 in total collections.

We took part as usual in the Letchworth Garden City Armed Forces Day in June, when over £400 was raised.

We have been supported by a number of individuals, local businesses and charitable organisations in various ways throughout the year. In total, donations and fundraising, including sponsorship and awards, generated over £13,000. This was a significant Increase on amounts received in the previous financial year and shows encouraging signs of recovery in difficult economic conditions for many people and charities. Gift Aid in the amount of £243 added to this amount.

The value of local support cannot be expressed sufficiently, but we would like to acknowledge this on behalf of all our volunteers and the people that benefit from the service we provide. A few of the organisations that contributed are listed below.

- Atlas Commercial
- Baldock & Clothall WI
- Benevity-Tenable
- Brickyard, Bancroft, Hitchin
- Doghouse Grooming, Arlesey
- Councillor Fiona Hill
- Councillor Keith Hoskins
- Gravenhurst Methodist Church
- Herts Community Foundation
- Hitchin Ladies Probus
- John Laing Charitable Trust
- LALG long-distance walking group
- Lions Letchworth & Baldock
- North Herts Council
- Priory Rotary Club Hitchin
- Rotary Club of Hitchin
- St Andrews Church
- Tallents, Hitchin
- The Three Tuns, Guilden Morden
- Toni & Guy, Hitchin
- Trinity Church Knebworth
- William & Mable Morris Trust

Thanks also to those who are taking a few extra seconds when ordering shopping on the internet to enable the branch to receive a contribution from many retailers. To do this, you can use **The Giving Machine**, www.thegivingmachine.co.uk; or **Easyfundraising**, www.easyfundraising.org.uk.

Web users have also donated via searching online for North Herts & Stevenage Samaritans.

Thanks to everyone for your loyal support, which has enabled our branch to remain fully operational.

Grants

We were very fortunate to continue to receive unrestricted grants from POhWER towards our general operating costs. In addition, we were awarded locality grant funding from two local councillors and £2,000 from HCF towards the cost of sending volunteers on the Samaritans Eastern Regional Conference. Of this, £600 was received in May 2023 after the receipts for the conference had been finalised.

We also received funding from North Herts Council to help with costs of hosting the Samaritans National Walk in July 2023.

Supporters (not individuals)

Providers of 'in-kind' or enabling services

We are very grateful to all the organisations that help us to carry out the work we do. This can be by direct donation or by providing 'in-kind' services or materials.

- Phillips Digital Print, Letchworth
- Satchells Estate Agents, Hitchin
- TPS Visual Communications, Letchworth Garden City

Donating

If you would like to help us, you can make a donation:

By bank transfer

Account name: North Herts & Stevenage Samaritans

Account number: 63678547

Sort code: 20-05-73

Please quote your name as reference.

By cheque

Please make your cheque payable to 'North Herts & Stevenage Samaritans' and send it to our branch address: 5 Nuns Close, Hitchin, SG5 1EP.

By text message

Text SAMSLOCAL 3 to 70460 to donate £3.

Texts cost £3 plus one standard rate message and you'll be opting in to hear more about our work and fundraising via telephone and SMS. If you'd like to give £3 but do not wish to receive marketing communications, text SAMSLOCALNOINFO 3 to 70460.

Caller support

In 2022–2023 North Herts and Stevenage Samaritans **answered 21,354 calls, spending 6,065 hours** supporting callers in distress. This is a 20% increase on the previous year. Our volunteers also participated in **749 online chat messages** as part of an ongoing pilot.

As always, we are infinitely grateful to our listening volunteers, each of whom devotes at least four hours per week listening to our callers, including on overnight shifts, when the need is particularly acute.

External relations

Outreach and talks

Outreach and talks activity have continued positively this year following Covid, and we have been able to continue to raise awareness and support our local community. Our Talks Team has been out and about raising awareness at a number of events, including talks to the Police Custody Officer training groups, local rotary and other local clubs. In addition, some of the key events are highlighted below.

In June 2022 we were delighted to return to our stand in Lister Hospital, on a monthly basis, to raise awareness of the Samaritans service. The stand has had a steady stream of staff and patients, who have been keen to find out about services offered. Also, following on from previous years, in September our volunteers represented Samaritans at three North Herts College Welcome Days. These were at the Stevenage Campus on Monkswood Way, the Stevenage Engineering & Construction Campus, and at Hitchin Campus. We also attended a North Herts College Dragons' Den event, where students proposed carefully thought-out fundraising plans. As we find that most young people have little or no awareness of Samaritans, it is especially rewarding to raise awareness with them of the support we provide.

In October we supported a POhWER Shout About It event. On 10 October, World Mental Health Day, volunteers supported awareness-raising sessions at both Hitchin and Stevenage railway stations. There was a great response, and the event was an overwhelming success, also supporting fundraising.

In December the Outreach team again attended railway stations to raise awareness prior to the festive season and Brew Monday. Our branch also decorated the Samaritans 'Listening Tree' at the Hitchin Holy Saviour Christmas Tree Festival.

Along with other organisations, we provided support to the Humanitarian Hub for the Ukraine refugees at Luton Airport. A large number of individual Ukrainians and their families were supported and signposted from the hub. This was a good collaborative initiative with other charities, until the ongoing management was taken over by Luton Borough Council in April 2023, as many of the individuals' needs related to housing and financial support. Still, Samaritans information continued to be provided.

The team has continued to have discussions and look for opportunities throughout the year to broaden our outreach services. We are optimistic that next year will see the service developing further as more volunteers become involved, and as interest from organisations and the educational sector grows.

Partnerships

The partnership with POhWER strengthens, and they continue to make regular payments to the branch as agents of Herts County Council. POhWER can make referrals to us over the telephone. However, they rarely do, tending instead to distribute our contact cards so those seeking support can call us directly. Representatives from Hitchin attended the POhWER Shout About It event held in Stevenage on 6 October 2022. 64 organisations provided information and awareness stands, which the general public were invited to visit. The event has been held annually since 2014, apart from 2020 and 2021, when it was put on hold because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Following consultation with Samaritan colleagues at Ware, Bedford and Luton branches, the police custody

telephone referral process ceased in June 2022. The number of referrals had dropped considerably during the previous two years to just one or two per quarter. Following training from various Samaritans branches, custody officers now give Samaritans contact cards to those passing through the custody suite so that they can call the national Samaritans number whenever they need our support.

We have striven to establish our partnership with the Hertfordshire University Trust (HPFT), with whom we signed a memorandum of understanding and information sharing agreement in November 2021, to enable us to work together in a pilot referral service. This still remains to be launched, but our branch is ready to commence the service whenever HPFT are in a position to do so. In February 2023 we recommenced talks with another consultant clinical psychiatrist at the trust, who has shown an interest in getting the referral system up and running in the near future.

Prisons

Whatever we are going through on the 'outside' – including bereavement, relationship problems, physical and mental illness, losing contact with relatives and friends – prisoners are going through those issues too. However, being locked up often means they have no control over these events and little influence over the outcomes.

Prisoners are an extremely vulnerable group, and the incidence of suicide and self-harm in prisons generally is on the increase. Prisons can be lonely, stressful, intimidating and scary places for some inmates, who need emotional support to get through their time inside. Many callers from prisons suffer with poor mental health.

Samaritans work in conjunction with the safer custody teams in most prisons in the UK. Inmates can seek support from Samaritans, using the free-to-use Samaritans phones as well as a free, confidential correspondence service. Some prisons now provide phones in individual prisoner cells, but these can only access certain selected numbers like close family and Samaritans.

Understandably, some prisoners prefer to speak to others who they see are in the same situation as themselves, which is why we carefully select and train prisoners to be Listeners. They then provide emotional support to other prisoners without financial reward or benefits. What they do get is some satisfaction that they are supporting others who are going through mental turmoil. Listeners are dedicated in what they do and get called out any time of the day or night.

Together with colleagues from the Samaritans Cambridge branch, some of our volunteers visit Littlehey Prison in Cambridgeshire. We support the Listener team, helping them do their job as well as promoting the work we do jointly with them to both prisoners and prison staff.

Publicity

We have engaged with national Samaritans publicity campaigns throughout the year, sharing news with local press and via our branch Twitter account, with some positive engagement. We launched the publicity campaign for the 2023 Samaritans National Walk, which our branch is hosting in summer 2033.

Our website is regularly updated and is worth perusing: www.samaritans.org/branches/hitchin

We also have a social media presence on Twitter. Follow us at twitter.com/NorthHertsSams

IT and comms

This team's primary function is to ensure an environment that allows volunteers to manage their calls whilst on shift, with a degree of automation, but with minimal hindrance or distraction. Our technology aims to provide high-quality audio, where appropriate, and discreet security for the volunteers' benefit.

Historically, negative experiences have included anything from total loss of service to poor quality or disrupted calls, resulting from failing technology due to wear and tear. Although the gap is unlikely to be reduced to zero faults, the updated infrastructure has moved us a long way to our earlier goals. This has been achieved by improvements in measures in our control – better phones, cables, hardware, software and infrastructure – where problems have in recent months been addressed more quickly. The team receives fewer error reports and, anecdotally, volunteers appear to feel more confident in the technical environment. There has also been progress with issues outside of our control – Virgin Media Business, our Internet provider, with whom we have something close to a personal relationship and who understand the way we operate; as well as SCO-controlled equipment, software and services.

We still struggle with ongoing disconnection issues on our Webchat lines in the pilot study. This is being addressed now as it is no longer being seen as burgeoning project or merely teething problems. We're collecting data to provide SCO, with empirical evidence, to solicit their help.

We recognise that any future technology updates in the branch need to take into account durability and permanence, lest we move premises in the foreseeable future, where a temporary solution might be seen as a less extravagant option.

We have a little way to go yet regarding 24-hour real-time technical support for our volunteers, but that's our focus in the coming months.

Leaders

Our Leader team have continued to provide vital support to our listening and online chat volunteers. This support includes being available throughout shifts to provide any necessary advice and guidance and to take offloads at the end of each shift from the on-shift volunteers. This Leader support helps ensure that the service provided by the branch is in line with Samaritans key policies and procedures. It also helps volunteers in their response to particularly difficult situations, and in ensuring that their emotional needs are met.

Recruitment

In the year of report, we recruited 27 new volunteers for training and also trained three returning volunteers. This is a decrease on the 40 new recruits last year, when we were catching up on the backlog from Covid.

The online information evenings and selection interview continued to work well in 2022/23, but it is pleasing to report that we have recently resumed face-to-face information evenings and interviews.

Rota

Samaritans continue to provide a 24/7 listening service in UK and ROI. Not all of our 201 branches are able to open 24/7, but our national call distribution system ensures that all calls receive a response.

In our branch we currently have approximately 90 listening volunteers and are always striving to recruit more. Our shifts are three to four hours long, with seven shifts in each 24 hours. As there are two volunteers on each shift, we can usually average 30 to 40 shifts a week. Volunteers select their own shifts online – typically three day/evening shifts plus one part-overnight shift within each four-week rota period. We offer an online swapping system for whenever a volunteer is subsequently unable to fulfil their shift.

The nationwide statistics indicate that greatest demand from callers, in relation to volunteer availability, is the period between 2 am and 6 am. We have therefore this year altered our two night-shift times to 10.30 pm–2.30 am and 2.30–6 am and open as many of these as we can.

We still have three weekday Online Chat shifts for those callers who may be uncomfortable with ringing or are unable to speak on the phone.

Training

During the 2022–23 financial year, 27 new volunteers progressed through our initial training. This involves six weeks of intensive training and homework, including online modules, which make up our 'Core' training. After some weeks of mentored shifts, those new volunteers regroup to complete three weeks of 'Embedding' training, which includes discussions around calls they have taken and their experiences on initial shifts.

Our branch welcomed three returning volunteers this year. Anyone who takes a year or more away from their listening duties is required to complete full Core and Embedding training afresh. When numbers allow, we offer this in a slightly condensed version, possible due to their previous Samaritans experience.

Our SCO training and development teams regularly review and update our training materials, and our training team welcomed newly developed Core materials in February 2023. Mentoring and Leader training modules/materials were also updated.

Our training deputy director has fully embraced the Samaritans new database, the Branch Management Tool, which keeps confidential records of all potential and new volunteers. He has taken on the role of BMT champion for our branch, and is looking to enable a move to 100% BMT management of our application, recruitment and training functions.

Our listening volunteers are regularly required to undertake further training, in both online and in-person formats. This year 100% of our volunteers completed the Key Policies online module provided by SCO. Our Continuous Development team also delivered face-to-face training (in person and via Zoom) on the subject of Continuous Support, where all our listening volunteers provide and receive feedback on their calls, which ensures maintenance of our high standards for the service we deliver to our callers.

Volunteer support

Volunteer Support is vital so we can offer support to all our volunteers whether they are on leave of absence, listening volunteers or support volunteers.

When volunteers feel valued and listened to, it helps to maintain their satisfaction and our high retention level. The Volunteer Support team offers continual availability for anyone to call and raise concerns, and we maintain regular contact with all our volunteers, including those on leave of absence.

This year, with the generous support of Herts Community Foundation and local councillors Keith Hoskins and Fiona Hill, we were able to fund a record number of volunteers attendance at the Samaritans Eastern Regional Conference. The feedback from those that attended was overwhelmingly positive.

Financial review

Overall

The financial statements cover the 12 months to 31 March 2023. Total income amounted to £26,060, compared with £13,674 in the previous year, the fundraising system is settling back into a stable environment. Total expenditure of £32,266 has decreased against the previous year of £34,087. Charitable activities of £24,456 include the accrued figure of £8,000 of contribution to SCO, due under our operating agreement with them. The operating profit for the year, including gains/losses on investment, amounted to a shortfall of £17,211, compared with a shortfall of £26,131 in 2021/22. The financial market has been unstable again this year, which has led to a fall in the value on the investments, but the trustees have discussed and decided to keep invested for the long term. The accumulated general reserves, which exclude fixed assets, amounted to £68,397 (2021/22: £80,608), which, in representing more than one year's normal expenditure, is considered by the trustees to adequately meet the needs of the branch for the foreseeable future. The total net assets of £85,998 is held in both bank deposits and investments (the latter valued at £67,997 as at 31 March 2023). The trustees are mindful of a need to move to new premises when a suitable property becomes available and are maintaining reserves for this purpose. The trustees hence decided to designate £50,000 as funds reserved towards the property move. This is not restrictive and may be reversed in future.

The title to the current freehold premises is held by Samaritans as custodian trustee and the charity, subject to a trust deed in respect of its premises.

Reserves

The trustees reviewed and updated the Financial Reserves Policy in the year since the last review and agreed a minimum level of six months and a maximum of 18 months of free reserves, to allow the branch to continue operating without financial income for that period without releasing long-term reserves or requiring assistance from SCO. This has been monitored on a regular basis. The trustees will continue to review the reserves policy on an annual basis. In the period from March 2022, the trustees have taken full account of the Charity Commission advice on the use of reserves. Cash flow projections indicate that North Herts & Stevenage Samaritans will end the financial year (2023/24) with unrestricted funds above the minimum reserves level.

Risk management

The trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed. At their meetings, they carry out this duty and ensure appropriate controls are in place and any necessary action is taken to mitigate such risks. The risk register is reviewed regularly by trustees at, or outside of, their meetings

Most protocols put in place at the start of the Covid outbreak have been lifted during the 2022/23 year when safe to do so. This has enabled more shifts to take place, whilst keeping volunteers safe. We operate under guidance provided by SCO.

Future plans

Cash flow estimates indicate that North Herts & Stevenage Samaritans will maintain the minimum reserves level throughout 2023/24 whilst meeting all financial commitments.

Under guidance from SCO, face-to-face support for our callers has not yet resumed, but we are reviewing whether we have sufficient resources and capability to comply with the safeguarding and other SCO requirements. For practical reasons, trustees continue to conduct meetings online.

Our outreach activities and fundraising have started to return to normal levels.

The trustees continue to look for a property more suited to the long-term growth of the branch and with full disability access.

Structure, governance and management

Structure

North Herts & Stevenage Samaritans became a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO), governed by constitution, on 22 June 2017. Trustees have a limit of six-year terms; except the director, who serves a three-year term, which can be extended by up to 12 months by the approval of SCO's board of trustees.

The day-to-day operation of the activities of the branch are controlled by the director, with the support of deputy directors. The director is appointed by the branch committee, under the recommendation of a consensus of the members of the branch and with approval from SCO.

The trustee committee is responsible for fundraising, the approval of expenditure, and the maintenance of the branch premises and equipment. Committee members/trustees are either elected or ex officio and serve as trustees for a period of no more than six years. Ex-officio committee members are appointed or stand down at the annual general meeting each year.

The trustees meet at least six times a year. All trustee meetings in the year have used Zoom, in accordance with constitutional and legal requirements.

Recruitment of trustees

Ilsa Hawtin was branch director and chair of trustees throughout the 2022–23 financial year.

New trustees are identified either through an open recruitment from the membership base, or by recommendation or selection for their skill and abilities. Appointments are subject to the approval of a quorum of members. On appointment, new trustees are provided with the information recommended by the Charity Commission. They receive Samaritans-specific training, as well as access to general trustee training, as part of their induction.

Additional trustees were appointed at an AGM in November 2022 to replace two trustees that had stepped down. Fiona Pearce who had been charity secretary, stood down on 28 November 2022 and – with permission from the Charity Commission (received 23 Nov 2022) – took a part-time employee position at the branch in an administrator role, commencing 1 December 2022. Kate Adams took over as charity secretary from 29 November 2022.

Governance

Over the 12 months of this review, the trustees carried out regular reviews of Samaritans standard policies, as required by SCO, and were able to advise to SCO that we are adhering to central guidance regarding governance, finance, data protection, and health and safety. We developed a fundraising strategy and reviewed our data protection and finance policies. Several trustees and deputy directors undertook data protection training.

North Herts & Stevenage Samaritans does not employ professional fundraisers in any capacity, and no complaints regarding fundraising were received for the period of this review.

Statement of trustees' responsibilities

The trustees are responsible for preparing the trustees' review and the financial statements, in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom accounting standards. The Charity Commission requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year that give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- observe the principles in the Charities SORP 2019
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity to enable them, as a matter of good practice, to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP 2019) applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Statement FRS 102. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Reference and administration – 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023

North Herts & Stevenage Samaritans – registered charity number 1173578

The committee members who served as trustees in the period were as follows:

Ilsa Hawtin	Director	Appointed 1 January 2021
Graham Sutton	Treasurer	Appointed 31 January 2020, re-appointed 28 November 2022
Alan Chaney		Appointed 3 Sept 2019, re-appointed 28 November 2022
Kate Adams	Secretary	Appointed 14 April 2021, re-appointed 28 November 2022
Tim Coulson		Appointed 14 April 2021, re-appointed 28 November 2022
Karen Proctor		Appointed 28 November 2022
Rachel Campbell		Appointed 28 November 2022
Fiona Pearce	Secretary	Appointed 14 April 2021, resigned 28 November 2022
Jude Brooks		Appointed 1 November 2020, re-appointed 22 November 2021, resigned April 24 2022
Sandra Oakes		Appointed 1 November 2020, re-appointed 22 November 2021, resigned 14 September 2022

Charity bank account	Barclays Bank, Leicester, LE87 2BB
Independent examiner	Tara Aldwin ACA, FKCA Ltd, 260–270 Butterfield, Great Marlings, Luton, LU2 8DL (Appointed 27 July 2022)
Charity registered address	5 Nuns Close, Hitchin, Herts, SG5 1EP
Contact telephone number	01462 654517
Website	www.samaritans.org/branches/hitchin

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' review up to and including page 12.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:

Signed: _____ (signature of authorised person)

Date: 27/9/23

Ilsa Hawtin, chair of trustee board (name and position of authorised person)

Signed: _____ (signature of authorised person)

Date: 27/09/2023

Graham Sutton, treasurer (name and position of authorised person)

Independent examiner's report

to the trustees of North Herts & Stevenage Samaritans

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of North Herts and Stevenage Samaritans ('the charity') for the year ended 31 March 2023.

Respective responsibilities and basis of report

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

I report in respect of my examination of the charity's accounts carried out under Section 145 of the 2011 Act; and in carrying out my examination I have followed the applicable directions given by the Charity Commissioners 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:

- accounting records were not kept in respect of the Charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with those; or
- the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of the 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.

Tara Aldwin ACA
FKCA LIMITED
Chartered Accountants

260–270 Butterfield
Great Marlings
Luton
LU2 8DL

Date: 3 October 2023

Financial accounts and notes for the year ended 31 March 2023

	Notes	Fixed asset cover fund	Designated general fund	Unrestricted general fund	2022/23 Total funds	2021/22 Total funds
		£	£	£	£	£
Incoming resources from generated funds						
Christmas cards		-	-	101	101	98
Interest income		-	-	2,087	2,087	2,516
Donations		-	-	8,635	8,635	851
Generated income, including from Friends of Samaritans		-	-	5,712	5,712	1,755
Grants income		-	-	9,297	9,297	8,000
Gift Aid		-	-	228	228	454
Total incoming resources from charitable activities		-	-	**26,060**	**26,060**	**13,674**
Costs of generating funds	2	-	49	1,049	1,098	1,927
Charitable activities	3	-	383	24,073	24,456	22,196
Support costs	4	-	49	6,663	6,712	9,964
Total resources expended		-	**481**	**31,785**	**32,266**	**34,087**
Net surplus/(deficit)		-	**(481)**	**(5,725)**	**(6,206)**	**(20,413)**
(Loss)/Gain on investment		-	-	(11,005)	(11,005)	(5,718)
Net movement in funds		-	**(481)**	**(16,730)**	**(17,211)**	**(26,131)**
Funds brought forward		**17,601**	**54,539**	**31,069**	**103,209**	**129,340**
Funds carried forward		**17,601**	**54,058**	**14,339**	**85,998**	**103,209**

Balance sheet at 31 MARCH 2023

		Notes	31 Mar 2023	31 Mar 2022
			£	£
FIXED ASSETS				
	Tangible assets			
	Building renovation – cost		14,808	14,808
	Building renovation – accumulated depreciation		(14,808)	(14,808)
	Freehold property – cost		17,601	17,601
	Office equipment		19,193	16,647
	Less accumulated depreciation on office equipment		(15,072)	(13,868)
Total tangible assets		6	**21,722**	**20,380**
Fixed asset investment		7	67,997	76,357
Total fixed assets			89,719	96,737
CURRENT ASSETS				
	Cash at bank and in hand			
	Barclays Community Account 63678547		5,459	8,418
	Debtors	8	3,308	3,056
Total current assets			**8,767**	**11,474**
CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR				
	Creditors	9	12,488	5,002
Total creditors: amounts falling due within one year			**12,488**	**5,002**
	Net current assets		**(3,721)**	**6,472**
	Total assets less current liabilities		**85,998**	**103,209**
	Net assets		**85,998**	**103,209**
CAPITAL AND RESERVES				
	Designated funds		54,058	5,020
	Fixed asset cover fund		17,601	17,601
	General funds		14,339	80,588
Total capital and reserves			**85,998**	**103,209**

These financial statements were approved by the trustees on 27/9 2023 and signed on their behalf by:

(Ilsa Hawtin, chair of trustees) (Graham Sutton, treasurer)

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023

Accounting policies

(a) These accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention as modified by the revaluation of investments to market value and in accordance with applicable accounting standards and the Statement of Recommended Practice on Accounting by Charities ('Charities SORP'), (effective 1 January 2019).

(b) Voluntary income received by way of donations and gifts is included in the statement of financial activities (SOFA) when received. Gifts in kind are valued and brought in as income.

(c) Gross fund-raising income from events organised by the charity itself is included in the SOFA when received. Where deemed material, fund-raising proceeds not yet received by the charity at the year-end have also been taken to income at the trustees' estimate of likely receivable amount.

(d) Covenant, gift aid and other income received by the charity in respect of which a claim for payment of tax has or will be made is grossed up for the tax recoverable and the gross amount recognised in the SOFA.

(e) Income from legacies is included in the SOFA when received or when the trustees are satisfied the charity has a legally enforceable right of receipt of a conservatively measured sum.

(f) Revenue grants for immediate financial support and assistance are recognised in the SOFA on receipt and on satisfaction of pre-conditions.

(g) Net fund-raising income raised by Friends of North Herts & Stevenage Samaritans is recognised in the SOFA on receipt by the charity as part of the Friends overall contribution, and the associated fund-raising costs separately disclosed in a note.

(h) Premises overheads are aggregated and allocated to the various functional activities of the charity on a percentage basis determined by the trustees and disclosed in a note.

(i) Any costs which cannot be specifically identified to another functional activity of the charity are included in the management and administration function.

(j) Depreciation is provided on all tangible fixed assets of material value held by the charity for its own use on a straight-line basis so as to write off their cost over their estimated useful lives as follows:

Freehold property	Nil
Building renovation costs	20% p.a.
Office equipment and furniture	20% p.a.

(k) No provision for taxation is included in the accounts as the charity is entitled to the exemption from tax afforded by Section 505 of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988.

(l) Funds held by the charity are either:

Unrestricted general funds – these are funds that can be used in accordance with the charitable objects at the discretion of the trustees.

Designated funds – these are funds set aside by the trustees out of unrestricted general funds for specific future purposes or projects.

Restricted funds – these are funds than 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.

	£	£	£	£
	2022/23 designated	2022/23 unrestricted	2022/23 total	2021/22 total
1. PREMISES OVERHEADS				
Rates and water rates	-	316	316	206
Power and heat	-	2,498	2,498	3,194
Repairs and renewals	202	1,036	1,238	11,087
Cleaning and housekeeping	19	2,694	2,713	314
Equipment repairs and replacements	260	184	444	874
IT Support	-	2,316	2,316	1,998
Office telephone and postage	-	351	351	697
Insurance and legal costs	-	997	997	799
Operating lease fees	-	100	100	100
Total for the year	**481**	**10,492**	**10,973**	**19,269**
Allocated to:				
Costs of generating funds	49	1,049	1,098	1,927
Charitable activities	383	8,394	8,777	15,415
Support costs	49	1,049	1,098	1,927
Total allocations for the year	**481**	**10,492**	**10,973**	**19,269**
2. COSTS OF GENERATING FUNDS				
Share of premises overheads (see detail 1)	49	1,049	1,098	1,927
Total for the year	**49**	**1,049**	**1,098**	**1,927**
3. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES				
Support line telephone	-	1,788	1,788	849
Volunteer travel expenses	-	307	307	242
Volunteer training	-	408	408	211
Outreach	-	136	136	102
Prison visit costs	-	836	836	438
Conference fees	-	4,654	4,654	2,490
Contribution to SCO support costs	-	7,550	7,550	2,449
Total activities	-	15,679	15,679	6,781
Share of premises overheads (see detail 1)	383	8,394	8,777	15,415
Total for the year	**383**	**24,073**	**24,456**	**22,196**

	£	£	£	£
	2022/23 designated	2022/23 unrestricted	2022/23 total	2021/22 total
4. SUPPORT COSTS				
Governance costs - Independent examiner's fee	-	1,764	1,764	1,325
Printing, stationery & photocopying-	-	83	83	974
Bank fees	-	-	-	20
Depreciation expense	-	1,204	1,204	695
Gifts and sundry expenses	-	-	-	5,023
Salaries	-	2,244	2,244	-
Payroll processing fees	-	110	110	-
Meeting costs	-	209	209	-
Total activities		**5,614**	**5,614**	**8,037**
Share of premises overheads (see note 2)	49	1,049	1,098	1,927
Total for the year	**49**	**6,663**	**6,712**	**9,964**

	2022/23	2021/22
	£	£
5. STAFF COSTS		
Salaries	2,244	-

No employee received emoluments in excess of £60,000.

6. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

		Freehold property	Building renovation	Office equipment & furniture	Total
		£	£	£	£
Cost					
At 1 April 2022		17,601	14,808	16,647	49,056
Additions		-	-	2,546	2,546
Disposals		-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2023		**17,601**	**14,808**	**19,193**	**51,602**
Depreciation					
At 1 April 2022		-	14,808	13,868	28,676
Charge for the period		-	-	1,204	1,204
Disposals		-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2023		-	**14,808**	**15,072**	**29,880**
Net book value	31 March 2023	17,601	-	4,121	21,722
	31 March 2022	17,601	-	-	17,601

7. LISTED INVESTMENT FUNDS	Cost	Market value
	£	£
At 1 April 2022	48,148	76,357
Investment income	-	2,645
Change in market value	-	(11,005)
At 31 March 2023	**48,148**	**67,997**

8. DEBTORS	2022/23	2021/22
	£	£
Trade debtors	1,700	-
Prepayments	1,608	997
Sundry debtors	-	2,059
Total debtors	**3,308**	**3,056**

9. CREDITORS	2022/23	2021/22
	£	£
Trade creditors	-	289
Accruals	12,488	4,713
Total creditors	12,488	5,002

10. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND EXPENSES

None of the charity's trustees were directly or indirectly remunerated in any way. It is the policy of the charity to reimburse in full all expenses properly incurred by its volunteers in connection with its charitable activities. During the year, the total amount reimbursed to the trustees and members of the charity's management committee in respect of travel costs for attending meetings, telephone, postage and similar expenses is included in note 4.

11. INDEMNITY INSURANCE

Samaritans has centrally affected professional indemnity insurance to protect employees, trustees, members of the charity's management committee and other volunteer members of all Samaritans branches.

12. DESIGNATED FUNDS

Fixed asset cover fund – represents funds designated to cover the cost of the charity's freehold property.
Designated general funds – represents funds designated for projects and improvements beyond normal annual expenditure.

We're here to listen

Call free day or night on

116 123

Email

jo@samaritans.org

Web

samaritans.org/hitchin

Write to us

Freepost SAMARITANS LETTERS

SAMARITANS

Samaritans of North Herts and Stevenage is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered in England and Wales (1173578). Our registered office is located at 5 Nuns Close, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG5 1EP.

SAMARITANS OF NORTH HERTS & STEVENAGE

England & Wales - Charity number 1173578

Accounts

SAMARITANS

North Herts & Stevenage



Annual review 2021–22

SAMARITANS

North Herts & Stevenage

Charity number 1173578

2021 – 2022 Annual review and accounts

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Director's message

It is my pleasure to introduce this **annual review on North Herts & Stevenage Samaritans** for the period of April 2021 to March 2022.

As we have emerged from the restrictions and the most serious concerns of the pandemic, we have relished the return to more normal ways of supporting our callers. One of the most rewarding aspects of volunteering at Samaritans is being part of such a wonderful team, so it is great testament to our volunteers' commitment that they persevered while personal contact was so restricted. During this financial year, Samaritans Central Office (SCO) staff also recognised the need for a large number of improvements to our safeguarding and call-quality monitoring, and our volunteers positively embraced the **additional training requirements**.

By March 2022, nearly all of those people who had needed to minimise personal contact were able to return to shifts within the branch. We have enjoyed the return to some **in-person get-togethers**, including for training, meetings and some outreach activities. It has also been great to be able to mix with more people within the branch.

Our training team has welcomed a record number of new candidates, delivering the extensive training and mentoring needed for them to become listening volunteers. Due to our ever-increasing numbers, and with the lack of disability access at our branch, we continue to explore the possibility of acquiring a **larger and more fit-for-purpose premises**.

One of the highlights of this year has been our **50th Anniversary Party**, celebrating half a century since our branch was founded in Hitchin. In November 2021 more than 80 volunteers, partners and friends enjoyed an evening of dinner, speeches and music at Hitchin's Sun Hotel. As many people's first social event since before the first lockdown, this was a truly heartwarming and motivational event, helping to bring our volunteers together and recognise their achievements. We were joined by our patron, Caroline Bowes Lyon, who kindly gave a speech and offered us to use her family home, St Paul's Walden Bury, for future fundraising events.

Fundraising remained a challenging aspect of keeping our branch operational, not least due to Covid restrictions minimising face-to-face activities. Fortunately, Sarah Millican's performance in Stevenage was permitted in December 2021, with her audience members generously donating £886 to our branch. We remain **extremely grateful to all the organisations and individuals** who provide financial support, enabling us to continue our work in supporting those experiencing emotional distress.

This has been a successful year of development and expansion for our branch, and I am lucky to have a **very supportive team of deputy directors and board of trustees**. Together, we will do everything we can to maintain and increase the essential service we provide to our callers. Pivotal to this service is the commitment of our volunteers, so we will continue to focus on enabling them to feel valued and motivated while maintaining our service to our callers.

Ilsa 383, branch director and chair of trustees, North Herts & Stevenage Samaritans

About Samaritans

Samaritans provides non-judgemental emotional support, 24 hours a day, for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those that could lead to suicide. We offer our service by telephone, email, letter and face to face, from our branches and at hospitals, schools, prisons, workplaces and festivals, through a network of 201 branches in the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

From its base in Hitchin, North Herts & Stevenage Samaritans is a charity operating as a branch of Samaritans. Whilst supporting the residents of the surrounding area, it also supports the residents of the whole of the UK and ROI via the Samaritans central calls system.

Our vision

Our vision is that fewer people die by suicide.

Our mission

- We make sure there's someone there for anyone who needs someone.
- Every year, Samaritans volunteers spend over one million hours answering calls for help via our unique 24-hour listening service, by email, letter and face to face, and through our Welsh language service.
- We give people ways to cope and the skills to be there for others.
- We want to encourage, promote and celebrate those moments of connection between people that can protect and even save lives. To do this, we're working in schools, prisons, workplaces and communities, and in partnership with organisations like Network Rail.
- We campaign to make suicide prevention a national and local priority.
- Our staff and volunteers run nationwide and community campaigns to raise awareness and influence decision-makers.

Our values

We have five core values. They're supported by these behaviours, which we share within the Samaritans organisation: support, trust, aspirational and respect.

- **Listening** – Exploring feelings alleviates distress and helps people to reach a better understanding of their situation and the options open to them.
- **Confidentiality** – If people feel safe, they are more likely to be open about their feelings.
- **Non-judgemental** – We want people to be able to talk to us without fear of prejudice or rejection.
- **People making their own decisions** – We believe that people have the right to find their own solutions and that telling people what to do takes responsibility away from them.
- **Human contact** – Giving people time, undivided attention and empathy meets a fundamental emotional need, and reduces distress and despair.

Fundraising

Fundraising and donations

For a good part of this year, our ability to fundraise was hampered by intermittent Covid restrictions. Some of these were government-imposed; others as a result of policy decisions based on risk assessments by SCO, local authorities and supermarket companies.

The first event we were able to take part in was the **Letchworth Garden City Armed Forces Day in June, when £240 was raised**.

In July and then the autumn of 2021, we were able to recommence some outreach activities. Although not fundraising as such, these activities enabled people to kindly donate to the branch.

Towards Christmas the return of Covid restrictions was a concern. Fortunately, it did not prevent the **Sarah Millican performance at Gordon Craig concert hall going ahead on 19 December**. Sarah is a great champion of Samaritans and, as part of her national tour, she invited local branches to carry out post-performance bucket collections. Her audience donated an amazing **£886** to the branch. This was the first opportunity to use our newly acquired card readers to accept cashless payments. Following this success, the card readers were also used in **January 2022 at the Brew Monday events** at Hitchin and Stevenage stations, when a very good **£450** was received.

Although it is usually a lesser element of fundraising and donations, the willingness of individuals and small businesses to have our small collecting cans has been welcome, as have other donations by individuals.

Various charity platforms enabled donations and fundraising sponsorship to generate about **£4,000**. Perhaps understandably, this was quite a bit less than in 2020/21, at the height of the pandemic.

Thanks to those who are taking a few extra seconds when ordering shopping on the internet to enable the branch to receive a contribution from many retailers. To do this, you can use:

Amazon Smile https://smile.amazon.co.uk

GivingMachine www.thegivingmachine.co.uk

Web users have also donated via searching online for Samaritans of North Herts & Stevenage.

Thanks to everyone for your loyal support, which has enabled our branch to remain fully operational despite the challenges and restrictions of the pandemic.

Supporters (not individuals)

Businesses with collecting cans

- Biggleswade Station Book Library (passengers and GTR staff)
- Brickyard, Bancroft, Hitchin
- Doghouse Grooming, Arlesey
- Rose & Crown Ashwell
- Tallents, Hitchin
- Toni & Guy, Hitchin
- The Bull, Whitwell
- Village Shop, Whitwell

Donations

- Baldock & Clothall WI
- North Herts Bowls Club
- SETTLE Housing Association

Grants

- Hertfordshire County Council (POhWER)

Providers of 'in-kind' or enabling services

We are very grateful to all the organisations that help us to carry out the work we do. This can be by direct donation or by providing 'in-kind' services or materials.

- Phillips Digital Print, Letchworth
- Satchells Estate Agents, Hitchin
- TPS Visual Communications, Letchworth Garden City

Donating

If you would like to help us, you can make a donation:

By bank transfer
Account name: Samaritans of North Herts & Stevenage
Account number: 63678547
Sort code: 20-05-73
Please quote your name as reference.

By cheque
Please make your cheque payable to 'Samaritans of North Herts & Stevenage' and send it to our branch address: 5 Nuns Close, Hitchin, SG5 1EP.

By text message
Text SAMSLOCAL 3 to 70460 to donate £3.
Texts cost £3 plus one standard rate message and you'll be opting in to hear more about our work and fundraising via telephone and SMS. If you'd like to give £3 but do not wish to receive marketing communications, text SAMSLOCALNOINFO 3 to 70460.

Caller support

From May 2021 until April 2022, **Hitchin volunteers answered 15,850 calls**. They also participated in an average of **80 webchats monthly**. Unfortunately, owing to continuing Covid restrictions, we were unable to admit face-to-face callers to our branch during the 2021–22 financial year. New safeguarding measures for face-to-face calls have been devised and, at time of writing, are being trialled at three larger Samaritans branches. The special service dedicated to supporting NHS staff has now ended, and the volunteers who offered that service from their homes have returned to the main branch.

SCO have also provided additional support to branches by forming a **specialised team who offer 24-hour advice on safeguarding**. Other teams also specialise in quality control, emails and caller support.

As always, we are infinitely grateful to our listening volunteers, each of whom devotes at least four hours a week listening to our callers, including overnight shifts when the need is particularly acute.

External relations

Outreach and talks

We have enjoyed the gradual return to outreach activities following the easing of Covid restrictions. This has enabled us to participate in the following events, raising awareness and supporting our local community.

In June 2021 we were present at the **Letchworth Armed Forces Day**, mainly for fundraising purposes. On two dates in July we had stands at Stevenage railway station, as part of the **Samaritans 'Big Listen' National Railway Partnership Campaign**. This resulted in an estimated 220 contacts with members of the public, raising awareness of Samaritans and encouraging people to contact us for emotional support. On the September **Hitchin Health and Wellbeing Day**, we made contact with approximately 70 people.

Also in September 2021, our volunteers represented Samaritans at three **North Herts College Welcome Days**, at the Stevenage Campus on Monkswood Way, the Stevenage Engineering & Construction Campus and at Hitchin Campus. We find that most young people have little or no awareness of Samaritans, so it is rewarding to raise awareness of the support we provide. On these three college days we made contact with an estimated 500 staff members and students.

In December we entered the **Hitchin Christmas Tree Festival**, the decorations on our tree celebrating the 50th anniversary of our branch.

In January 2022 our branch participated in the Samaritans national campaign for **Brew Monday**, with volunteers manning stalls at Hitchin and Stevenage railway stations. In February we took part in the **Network Rail and Safety Partners Action Day** at Stevenage station. In March we supported the Bedfordshire Initiative at Luton Airport, the **Ukraine Refugees Hub**.

Our **Talks Team** has been delivering an increasing number of presentations, raising awareness at other organisations. From October to December, in conjunction with other local Samaritans branches, the team provided weekly talks to the **Police Custody Officer training** groups, as part of their annual continuous development. This is to ensure that police officers know of the support Samaritans can provide, especially as there has been an increase in suicide numbers amongst those leaving police custody.

IT and comms

The IT support team continues to ensure our technology is appropriate, current and functional, primarily to enable **communication between callers and volunteers**. It also provides safety and security measures, including the CCTV system, which allows immediate remote review of any significant intrusions in the branch, as well as the possibility of on-demand recordings of the front and back of our premises.

Our technology has allowed us to function as a branch in Covid-limiting times, and to continue to teach, learn and recruit in ways not even considered five years ago. It's the IT support team's role to ensure, as far as possible, that we find a balance in enjoying the benefits of technology without affecting the confidence of our volunteers (through too-rapid integration), or the technology adversely affecting volunteers' ability take calls.

This system is now **more secure than before**, with more options to balance security with accessibility. It has a backup, fail-safe system, in case of a total denial of service or internet outage.

Leaders

Our Leader team have continued to provide vital support to our listening and online chat volunteers. This support includes being available throughout shifts to provide any **necessary advice and guidance** and to take **offloads at the end of each shift** from the on-shift volunteers. This Leader support helps ensure that the service provided by the branch is in line with Samaritans key policies and procedures. It also helps volunteers in their response to particularly difficult situations, and in ensuring that their emotional needs are met.

During this period, a few Leaders retired for various reasons but were replaced by new Leader volunteers. This meant that the overall number of Leaders remained at about 18 – approximately the same as in the previous year. Although the addition of the online chat service increased the number of weekly shifts, the dedication and commitment of the team meant that all shifts were covered.

Leaders are represented on the branch leadership team by a deputy director. Along with other deputy directors, this provides support to the branch director and helps to provide consistency in our service to callers.

Partnerships

We continued to liaise with the inspector of the **Police Custody Team** and our neighbouring Samaritans branches, to review and update our current processes and procedures for the police custody suites. This was to ensure we are meeting the needs of distressed detainees in the best possible way.

Our Talks Team, in conjunction with other local Samaritans branches, provided weekly talks to the Police Custody Officer training groups, as part of their annual continuous development, from October 2021 to December 2021.

Due to the pandemic, we were unable to meet face to face with representatives from POhWER. However, we continued to attend six-weekly sessions with them and other local charitable organisations via Zoom.

In November 21 we signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) and an information sharing agreement with the **Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust**. The MOU will enable us to work together in a pilot to provide a complementary referral service to their service users. It will also allow the development of a range of opportunities, for service users and staff to benefit from

the knowledge and experiences offered by Samaritans in support of emotional wellbeing and suicide prevention.

Prisons

Prisoners are an **extremely vulnerable group**, and the incidence of suicide and self-harm in prisons generally is on the increase. Prisons can be lonely, stressful, intimidating and scary places for some inmates, who need emotional support to get through their time in prison. More and more of our prison callers suffer with poor mental health. The Covid pandemic necessitated most prisoners being locked up in their cells for 23 hours a day. Visits from family members and friends, as well as from Samaritans volunteers, were also curtailed, adding to the **feelings of isolation** within prison and being cut off from the outside world.

Samaritans work in conjunction with the safer custody teams in most prisons in the UK. Inmates can seek support from Samaritans using the free-to-use Samaritans phones as well as via a free, confidential correspondence service.

Understandably, some prisoners prefer to speak to others who are in the same situation as themselves, which is why we train and carefully select prisoners to be **Listeners**, who can offer listening support to fellow inmates in person at the very time they are in need. Listeners are unpaid, available 24/7, and give up their time freely, to help those less able to cope with life inside. Together with colleagues from Samaritans Cambridge branch, some of our volunteers visit **Littlehey Prison in Cambridgeshire**. We support the Listener team, helping them do fulfil their roles, as well as promoting the work we do jointly with them.

During this year we have been able to get back to our regular weekly visits and train a new group of Listeners. We are therefore on our way to resuming our usual level of activity.

Publicity

We have had some **good press coverage** of events and activities over the year thanks to local media outlets, including a feature in our local newspaper, the *Comet*, with coverage of the visit from David Matthews to Hitchin as part of 'The Listening Walk' – a 6,000 mile walk on which he visited every Samaritans branch in the UK and Ireland, raising awareness and donations for the charity.

Our website is regularly updated and is worth perusing: www.samaritans.org/branches/hitchin

We also have a social media presence on Twitter. Follow us at twitter.com/NorthHertsSams

Recruitment

Changes made during the pandemic to enable us to still be able to recruit new volunteers are at present still in place. The online information evenings and selection interviews work well, and we have managed to recruit 40 new volunteers during this year. Although the online system works, we are considering starting up face-to-face selections and interviews again, hopefully in the near future, as we feel they are a vital part of recruitment.

Rota

Samaritans are privileged to have been able to continue our **24/7 listening service** in the UK and ROI throughout the pandemic. While not all of our 201 branches are open all the time, we have a national call distribution system, which means all calls should receive a response.

In Hitchin branch we have around 90 listening volunteers and are striving to recruit and train more so we can open for more hours. Our shifts are either three or four hours long, with seven shifts each 24 hours, so our volunteer numbers generally result in **30 to 40 shifts running in an average week**. We operate an online self-rota system for a four-week period, which is issued about three weeks ahead. Volunteers are expected to cover one part-overnight shift and three daytime shifts during each rota. An effective and efficient online arrangement exists for swapping when a volunteer becomes unable to fulfil a chosen shift, enabling us to close as few shifts as possible.

In the height of the pandemic and lockdowns, a number of volunteers were isolating or shielding, and our number of shifts necessarily reduced. However, this year we are seeing a **return to good numbers** and hope this will continue.

In April 2021 we started opening three weekday 7.30 pm shifts of three hours each for **online chat** callers, in addition to telephone shifts. Listening volunteers are comprehensively trained and have a further session of training for online chat. This service is proving successful and gives an alternative means of communication for callers uncomfortable with or unable to speak to us by phone.

Our volunteers come from different age groups and walks of life but form a very supportive team working together towards the same goal – supporting those in distress or despair in the hopes that our service will be of some help.

Training

In the 2021–2022 financial year, a **record number of new volunteers** successfully applied to become active listening volunteers at our branch. All of those 40 volunteers underwent our extensive initial (Core) training, with sessions delivered via Zoom, and gave very positive feedback on the training they received.

Our training team ran **four Continuous Development sessions**, using a combination of face-to-face and Zoom sessions. With outreach activities resuming as Covid restrictions eased, we needed to find ways to deliver the additional training required by all volunteers delivering emotional support outside of the branch, before which our trainers needed to receive the relevant training. The team overcame these challenges, and by the end of this financial year, 15 of our volunteers were ready to undertake outreach activities.

Another challenge, faced by most Samaritans branches nationwide, is the recruitment and training of **Leaders**, who support listening volunteers during and after each shift. In 2021–2022 the training team prepared five new leaders for this vital role.

Another highly experienced volunteer took over as deputy director for training in February 2022. Peter has ambitious plans for 2022–2023, including resuming face-to-face delivery of some Core training sessions; and improving the processes between recruitment/selection and training, while also remaining an active member of the east region's Regional Training Team.

Volunteer support

As the pandemic restrictions began to lift, many of the volunteers on Covid leave felt able to return to the branch to resume listening shifts. We felt it was very important to make sure all returning volunteers felt **safe and well supported** on their return. We spoke to all returning volunteers to see what we could put in place to help ease them back into the branch. For some this was additional training, while many were allocated an experienced buddy volunteer for their first few shifts back. Some, who were still nervous about returning, opted to do shifts with a chosen volunteer until they felt safe to mix with additional people.

Following guidelines from SCO, in July 2021 we were eventually able to **remove the half-hour gap between shifts**, which had been in place to reduce contact between volunteers. This return to increased interaction significantly lifted morale amongst our volunteers, in addition to **increasing our hours of support**.

Supporting all our volunteers, whether they are actively taking shifts or on leave of absence, is vitally important in making them feel valued and appreciated. This helps maintain our high retention level, allowing us to continue delivering the optimum level of support for our callers.

Financial review

The financial statements cover the 12 months to 31 March 2022. Total income amounted to £13,236, compared with £60,908 in the previous year, when we had extraordinary support from grants.

Once again, self-generated income was much reduced due to the restrictions imposed by Covid; we managed to utilise the reserves and grants from previous years to keep the branch going without having to touch our long-term reserves.

Total expenditure of £33,649 has decreased against the previous year of £41,532. Costs were incurred in completing the branch fire safety commitments for volunteers, which is always an imperative. Governance costs of £11,221 include the accrued figure of £3,513 of contribution to SCO, due under our operating agreement with them. The operating deficit for the year, including gains/losses on investment, amounted to a shortfall of £26,131, compared with a surplus of £20,578 in 2020/21. The financial market has been very unstable this year, which has led to a fall in the value on the investments, but the trustees have discussed and decided to keep invested for the long term.

The accumulated general reserves, which exclude fixed assets (see page 15), amounted to £85,608 (2020/21: £111,738),which, in representing more than one year's normal expenditure, is considered by the trustees to adequately meet the needs of the branch for the foreseeable future.

The total net assets of £103,209 is held in both bank deposits and investments (the latter valued at £76,357 as at 31 March 2022).

The trustees are mindful of a need to move to premises when a suitable property becomes available and are maintaining reserves for this purpose (see 'Future plans' below). The title to the freehold premises is held by Samaritans as custodian trustee and the charity, subject to a trust deed in respect of its premises.

Reserves

The trustees reviewed and updated the Financial Reserves Policy in the year since the last review and agreed a minimum level of six months and a maximum of 18 months of free reserves, to allow the branch to continue operating without financial income for that period without releasing long-term reserves or requiring assistance from SCO. This has been monitored on a regular basis. The trustees will continue to review the reserves policy on an annual basis.

In the period from March 2021, the trustees have taken full account of the Charity Commission advice on the use of reserves. Cash flow projections indicate that Samaritans of North Herts & Stevenage will end the financial year (2022/23) with unrestricted funds above the minimum reserves level.

Risk management

The trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed. At their meetings, they carry out this duty and ensure appropriate controls are in place and any necessary action is taken to mitigate such risks.

Many of the protocols put in place in March 2020 at the start of the Covid outbreak remained in force during the 2021–22 year to keep volunteers safe. These measures are regularly reviewed as guidance is provided by SCO.

In addition, a risk register has been developed during this financial year, and it is reviewed regularly by trustees at their meetings.

Future plans

Cash flow estimates indicate Samaritans of North Herts & Stevenage will maintain the minimum reserves level throughout 2022/23 whilst meeting all financial commitments.

At the time of writing, although all restrictions have been lifted in England since 19 July 2021, Covid outbreaks remain a concern. Under guidance from SCO, face-to-face support for our callers has not resumed. Similarly, for both safety and practical reasons, trustees continue to conduct meetings online.

Our outreach activities and fundraising have started to increase, with additional precautions advised to ensure the safety of both service users and volunteers.

The trustees continue to look for a property more suited to the long-term growth of the branch and with full disability access.

Structure, governance and management

Samaritans of North Herts & Stevenage became a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO), governed by constitution, on 22 June 2017. Trustees have a limit of six-year terms; except the director, who serves a three-year term, which can be extended by up to 12 months by the approval of SCO's board of trustees.

The day-to-day operation of the activities of the branch are controlled by the director, with the support of deputy directors. The director is appointed by the branch committee, under the recommendation of a consensus of the members of the branch and with approval from SCO.

The trustee committee is responsible for fundraising, the approval of expenditure, and the maintenance of the branch premises and equipment. Committee members/trustees are either elected or ex officio and serve as trustees for a period of no more than six years. Ex-officio committee members are appointed or stand down at the annual general meeting each year.

The trustees meet at least six times a year. All trustee meetings in the year have used Zoom, in accordance with constitutional and legal requirements.

Recruitment of trustees

Ilsa Hawtin was branch director and chair of trustees throughout the 2021–22 financial year.

New trustees are identified either through an open recruitment from the membership base, or by recommendation or selection for their skill and abilities. Appointments are subject to the approval of a quorum of members. On appointment, new trustees are provided with the information recommended by the Charity Commission. They receive Samaritans-specific training, as well as access to general trustee training, as part of their induction.

Additional trustees, including a branch secretary, were appointed at an EGM in April 2021. After this, the new trustee board conducted a skills review during the 2021–22 financial year, confirming they had the necessary representation to operate effectively.

Governance

Over the 12 months of this review, the trustees carried out regular reviews of Samaritans standard policies, as required by SCO, and were able to advise to SCO that we are adhering to central guidance regarding governance, finance, data protection, and health and safety. We introduced policies to cover conflicts of interest, financial controls and data protection; and we continue to focus on governance. At the time of writing, new policies on fire safety and fundraising have been drafted for approval.

Samaritans of North Herts & Stevenage does not employ professional fundraisers in any capacity, and no complaints regarding fundraising were received for the period of this review.

Statement of trustees' responsibilities

The trustees are responsible for preparing the trustees' review and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom accounting standards. The Charity Commission requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year that give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- observe the principles in the Charities SORP 2019
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity to enable them, as a matter of good practice, to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP 2019) applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Statement FRS 102. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Reference and administration – 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022

Samaritans of North Herts & Stevenage – registered charity number 1173578

The committee members who served as trustees in the period were as follows:

Ilsa Hawtin	Director	Appointed 1 January 2021
Graham Sutton	Treasurer	Appointed 31 January 2020, re-appointed 22 November 2021
Barbara Haines		Resigned 14 April 2021
Steven Harrison		Resigned 14 April 2021
Valerie Docking		Resigned 14 April 2021
Jan Gosling		Resigned 14 April 2021
Jude Brooks		Appointed 1 November 2020, re-appointed 22 November 2021, resigned April 24 2022
Alan Chaney		Appointed 3 Sept 2019, re-appointed 22 November 2021
Sandra Oakes		Appointed 1 November 2020, re-appointed 22 November 2021, resigned 14 September 2022
Kate Adams		Appointed 14 April 2021, re-appointed 22 November 2021
Tim Coulson		Appointed 14 April 2021, re-appointed 22 November 2021
Fiona Pearce	Secretary	Appointed 14 April 2021, re-appointed 22 November 2021

Charity bank account	Barclays Bank, Leicester, LE87 2BB
Independent examiner	Tara Aldwin ACA, FKCA Limited, 260–270 Butterfield, Great Marlings, Butterfield Business Park, Luton, LU2 8DL (Appointed 27 July 2022)
Charity registered address	5 Nuns Close, Hitchin, Herts, SG5 1EP
Contact telephone number	01462 453100
Website	www.samaritans.org/branches/hitchin

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' review up to and including page 12.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:

Signed: _____ (Signature of authorised person)

Date: 25/11/22

Ilsa Hawtin, chair of trustee board (Name and position of authorised person)

Signed: _____ (Signature of authorised person)

Date: 25/11/22

Graham Sutton, treasurer (Name and position of authorised person)

Independent examiner's report

to the trustees of Samaritans of North Herts & Stevenage

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Samaritans of North Herts and Stevenage (the charity) for the year ended 31 March 2022.

Respective responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Charity you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

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

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that:

- accounting records were not kept in respect of the Charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
- the accounts do not accord with those records; or
- the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of the 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.

Tara Aldwin ACA
FKCA LIMITED
Chartered Accountants

260–270 Butterfield
Great Marlings
Luton
Beds
LU2 8DL

25/11/2022

Financial accounts and notes for the year ended 31 March 2022

		Fixed asset cover fund	Designated general fund	Unrestricted general fund	2021/22 Total funds	2020/21 Total funds
		£	£	£	£	£
Incoming resources from generated funds						
Christmas card sale		-	-	98	98	-
Interest income		-	-	2,516	2,516	-
Prison income		-	-	(438)	(438)	(1,040)
Donations		-	-	851	851	22,928
Generated income, including from Friends of Samaritans		-	-	1,755	1,755	9,580
Grants income		-	-	8,000	8,000	29,440
Gift Aid		-	-	454	454	-
Total incoming resources from charitable activities		-	-	13,236	13,236	60,908
Costs of generating funds	2	-	645	1,415	2,060	2,440
Charitable activities	3	-	5,156	15,212	20,368	21,102
Governance costs	4	-	645	10,576	11,221	17,990
Total resources expended		-	6,446	27,203	33,649	41,532
Net surplus/(deficit)		-	(6,446)	(13,967)	(20,413)	19,376
(Loss)/Gain on investment		-	-	(5,718)	(5,718)	1,202
Net movement in funds		-	(6,446)	(19,685)	(26,131)	20,578
Funds brought forward		17,601	11,466	100,273	129,340	108,762
Funds carried forward		17,601	5,020	80,588	103,209	129,340

Balance sheet at 31 MARCH 2022

		31 Mar 2022 £	31 Mar 2021 £
FIXED ASSETS			
	Tangible assets		
	Building renovation – cost	14,808	14,808
	Building renovation – accumulated depreciation	(14,808)	(14,808)
	Freehold property – cost	17,601	17,601
	Office equipment	16,647	13,173
	Less accumulated depreciation on office equipment	(13,868)	(13,173)
Total tangible assets		20,380	17,601
	Fixed asset investments		
	BLK Charities UK Bond Fund 00005085	76,357	80,118
Total fixed assets		96,737	97,719
CURRENT ASSETS			
	Cash at bank and in hand		
	Barclays Community Account 63678547	8,418	44,366
	Total cash at bank and in hand	8,418	44,366
	Sundry debtors	3,056	6,867
Total current assets		11,474	51,233
CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR			
	Accounts payable	289	-
	Accruals	4,713	19,612
Total creditors: amounts falling due within one year		5,002	19,612
	Net current assets	6,472	31,621
	Total assets less current liabilities	103,209	129,340
	Net assets	103,209	129,340
CAPITAL AND RESERVES			
	Designated funds	5,020	11,466
	Fixed asset cover fund	17,601	17,601
	General funds	80,588	100,273
Total capital and reserves		103,209	129,340

These financial statements were approved by the trustees on 25 November 2022 and signed on their behalf by:

(Ilsa Hawtin, chair of trustees)

(Graham Sutton, treasurer)

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022

Accounting policies

(a) These accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention as modified by the revaluation of investments to market value and in accordance with applicable accounting standards and the Statement of Recommended Practice on Accounting by Charities ('Charities SORP'), (effective 1 January 2019).

(b) Voluntary income received by way of donations and gifts is included in the statement of financial activities (SOFA) when received. Gifts in kind are valued and brought in as income.

(c) Gross fund-raising income from events organised by the charity itself is included in the SOFA when received. Where deemed material, fund-raising proceeds not yet received by the charity at the year end have also been taken to income at the trustees' estimate of likely receivable amount.

(d) Covenant, gift aid and other income received by the charity in respect of which a claim for payment of tax has or will be made is grossed up for the tax recoverable and the gross amount recognised in the SOFA.

(e) Income from legacies is included in the SOFA when received or when the trustees are satisfied the charity has a legally enforceable right of receipt of a conservatively measured sum.

(f) Revenue grants for immediate financial support and assistance are recognised in the SOFA on receipt and on satisfaction of pre-conditions.

(g) Net fund-raising income raised by Friends of Samaritans of North Herts & Stevenage is recognised in the SOFA on receipt by the charity as part of the Friends overall contribution, and the associated fund-raising costs separately disclosed in a note.

(h) Premises overheads are aggregated and allocated to the various functional activities of the charity on a percentage basis determined by the trustees and disclosed in a note.

(I) Any costs which cannot be specifically identified to another functional activity of the charity are included in the management and administration function.

(j) Depreciation is provided on all tangible fixed assets of material value held by the charity for its own use on a straight line basis so as to write off their cost over their estimated useful lives as follows:

Freehold property	Nil
Building renovation costs	20% p.a.
Office equipment and furniture	20% p.a.

(k) No provision for taxation is included in the accounts as the charity is entitled to the exemption from tax afforded by Section 505 of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988.

(l) Funds held by the charity are either:

Unrestricted general funds – these are funds that can be used in accordance with the charitable objects at the discretion of the trustees.

Designated funds – these are funds set aside by the trustees out of unrestricted general funds for specific future purposes or projects.

Restricted funds – these are funds than 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

	£	£	£	£

	2021/22 designated	2021/22 unrestricted	2021/22 total	2020/21 total
1. PREMISES OVERHEADS				
Rates and water rates	-	206	206	325
Power and heat	-	3,194	3,194	2,761
Repairs and renewals	5,654	5,433	11,087	7,266
Cleaning and housekeeping	26	288	314	3,794
Equipment repairs and replacements	766	108	874	3,903
IT Support	-	1,998	1,998	5,315
Office telephone and postage	-	697	697	222
Insurance and legal costs	-	799	799	814
Independent examiner's fees	-	1,325	1,325	-
Operating lease fees	-	100	100	-
Total for the year	6,446	14,148	20,594	24,400
Allocated to:				
Costs of generating funds	645	1,415	2,060	2,440
Charitable activities	5,156	11,318	16,474	19,520
Governance costs	645	1,415	2,060	2,440
Total allocations for the year	6,446	14,148	20,594	24,400
2. COSTS OF GENERATING FUNDS				
Share of premises overheads (see detail 1)	645	1,415	2,060	2,440
Total for the year	645	1,415	2,060	2,440
3. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES				
Emergency telephone	-	849	849	534
Volunteer travel expenses	-	242	242	686
Volunteer training	-	211	211	326
Advertising	-	-	-	36
Outreach	-	102	102	-
Conference fees	-	2,490	2,490	-
Total activities	-	3,894	3,894	1,582
Share of premises overheads (see detail 1)	5,156	11,318	16,474	19,520
Total for the year	5,156	15,212	20,368	21,102

	£	£	£	£
	2021/22 designated	2021/22 unrestricted	2021/22 total	2020/21 total
4. GOVERNANCE COSTS				
Printing, stationery and photocopying	-	974	974	-
Bank fees	-	20	20	-
Depreciation expense	-	695	695	-
Gifts and sundry expenses	-	5,023	5,023	662
Total activities	-	6,712	6,712	662
Contribution to SCO support costs	-	2,449	2,449	14,888
Share of premises overheads (see detail 1)	645	1,415	2,060	2,440
Total for the year	645	10,576	11,221	17,990

5. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS	Freehold property £	Building renovation £	Office equipment & furniture £	Total £
Cost				
At 1 April 2021	17,601	14,808	13,173	45,582
Additions	-	-	3,474	3,474
Disposals	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2022	17,601	14,808	16,647	49,056
Depreciation				
At 1 April 2021	-	14,808	13,173	27,981
Charge for the period	-	-	695	695
Disposals	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2022	-	14,808	13,868	28,676
Net book value 31 March 2022	17,601	-	2,779	20,380
31 March 2021	17,601	-	-	17,601

6. LISTED INVESTMENT FUNDS	Cost £	Market value £
At 1 April 2021	48,148	80,118
Investment income	-	1,957
Change in market value	-	(5,718)
At 31 March 2022	48,148	76,357

7. SUNDRY DEBTORS	2021/22 £	2020/21 £
Sundry debtors	3,056	6,867
Total sundry debtors	3,056	6,867

8. CREDITORS	2021/22	2020/21
	£	£
Trade creditors	289	-
Accruals	4,713	19,612
Total sundry debtors	5,002	19,612

9. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND EXPENSES

None of the charity's trustees were directly or indirectly remunerated in any way. It is the policy of the charity to reimburse in full all expenses properly incurred by its volunteers in connection with its charitable activities. During the year, the total amount reimbursed to the trustees and members of the charity's management committee in respect of travel costs for attending meetings, telephone, postage and similar expenses is included in note 4.

10. INDEMNITY INSURANCE

Samaritans has centrally effected professional indemnity insurance to protect employees, trustees, members of the charity's management committee and other volunteer members of all Samaritans branches.

11. DESIGNATED FUNDS

Fixed asset cover fund – represents funds designated to cover the cost of the charity's freehold property.
Designated general funds – represents funds designated for projects and improvements beyond normal annual expenditure.

We're here to listen

Call free day or night on

116 123

Email

jo@samaritans.org

Web

samaritans.org/hitchin

Visit us

5 Nuns Close
Hitchin
SG5 1EP

SAMARITANS

Samaritans of North Herts and Stevenage is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered in England and Wales (1173578). Our registered office is located at 5 Nuns Close, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG5 1EP.

SAMARITANS OF NORTH HERTS & STEVENAGE

England & Wales - Charity number 1173578

Accounts

SAMARITANS

North Herts & Stevenage

Charity number 1173578

2020–2021 Annual report and accounts

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Director's message

It is my pleasure to introduce this **annual report on North Herts & Stevenage Samaritans** for the period of April 2020 to March 2021.

I first need to pass on heartfelt thanks to **Hilary 1090**, experienced previous branch director from Chelmsford Samaritans, who took on the role of **interim director and chair of trustees** for our branch from 1 January 2020. This was shortly before we were all hit by the unsettling news and restrictions of the Covid-19 pandemic, which necessitated a rethink and reorganisation of all local and national Samaritans activities and procedures.

One of the overriding fears of any charity during this time was the threat to fundraising. Research in July 2020 showed that one in three charities feared they would not survive the impact of the pandemic, or that they would at least need to make cuts to service delivery. North Herts & Stevenage Samaritans shared these concerns, and we are delighted now to report that we have successfully made it through the first year of Covid-19 with **minimal disruption** to the support we provide to our callers.

Thanks for this success are due to our fundraising teams and to all of those who have provided us with much-needed funding. Please see the Fundraising section below for details of all the individuals, organisations and institutions who have helped us financially during this period. Thank you for enabling us to survive – and thrive – in these most challenging times.

The emotional support we provide was confirmed by the government in March 2020 as an **essential service**, with our volunteers recognised as key workers and therefore permitted to continue attending the branch for shifts. However, **volunteer safety** remained of the upmost importance, with all branches adopting and following strict guidelines. This all had to be undertaken while minimising disruption to our helpline and reassuring the public that we were still here for those who needed us most.

Covid restrictions soon became the new norm for our branch, including strict hygiene standards and social distancing, reduced fundraising and outreach activities, different approaches to meetings, a new rota system, different shift patterns, new online training, and 'rainbow leave' for any volunteers who needed to take extra precautions against the health risks posed by Covid-19. It is testament to the **dedication of Hilary, the trustees and her team of deputy directors** that these measures were successfully introduced and maintained throughout lockdown. And **all of our volunteers** must be credited for adapting to the numerous new requirements, while constantly assessing the risks to their own health.

As in many other areas of life, some of the new measures – such as virtual meetings and self-signup to our rota – have proven so successful that they will be continued for the foreseeable future. And while people throughout the world reassessed life's priorities, we saw a **nationwide increase** in the number of people applying to become volunteers, including at our own branch. The **new online training** seemed dauntingly challenging at the start of the pandemic, but our training team positively embraced this new way of working, and by the end of this financial year managed to clear our backlog of potential volunteers.

On 1 January 2021 I assumed the role of branch director and chair of trustees for North Herts & Stevenage Samaritans. Since that date it has been a real privilege to work with so many committed volunteers in continuing the work of our branch as we enter our **50th anniversary year**. It is also wonderful to have seen how our longest-serving volunteer, **Adeline**, who has been at our branch since its start in Hitchin in 1971, in February 2021 received the **Dedication Award** in the Volunteer Achievement Awards from North Herts District Council. An inspiration to us all!

As we move forward in 2021, we have a number of plans in place for the **further improvement** of North Herts & Stevenage Samaritans. These include the transformation of an unused room in the branch into a second ops room to **increase our capacity for service delivery**. We are also continuing to explore

the possibility of acquiring a larger and more **fit-for-purpose property**, which would enable all volunteers and face-to-face visitors to gain access to our branch and all its facilities.

The main focus of our branch as we move into the new financial year will remain on providing emotional support to those who are experiencing distress and despair, including suicidal feelings. Pivotal to this is the wellbeing of our volunteers, so I will strive to find and support ways to help our volunteers feel connected, valued and motivated. I am lucky to have a **very supportive team of deputy directors and a highly capable board of trustees**. Together, we will do everything we can to support our volunteers in supporting our branch, thereby continuing the essential service we provide to our callers.

Ilsa 383, branch director and chair of trustees

About Samaritans

Samaritans provides non-judgemental emotional support, 24 hours a day, for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those that could lead to suicide. We offer our service by telephone, email, letter and face to face, from our branches and at hospitals, schools, prisons, workplaces and festivals, through a network of 201 branches in the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

From its base in Hitchin, North Herts & Stevenage Samaritans is a charity operating as a branch of Samaritans. Whilst supporting the residents of the surrounding area, it also supports the residents of the whole of the UK and ROI via the Samaritans central calls system.

Our vision

Our vision is that fewer people die by suicide.

Our mission

- We make sure there's someone there for anyone who needs someone.
- Every year, Samaritans volunteers spend over one million hours answering calls for help via our unique 24-hour listening service, by email, letter and face to face, and through our Welsh language service.
- We give people ways to cope and the skills to be there for others.
- We want to encourage, promote and celebrate those moments of connection between people that can protect and even save lives. To do this, we're working in schools, prisons, workplaces and communities, and in partnership with organisations like Network Rail.
- We campaign to make suicide prevention a national and local priority.
- Our staff and volunteers run nationwide and community campaigns to raise awareness and influence decision-makers.

Our values

We have five core values. They're supported by these behaviours, which we share within the Samaritans organisation: support, trust, aspirational and respect.

- **Listening** – Exploring feelings alleviates distress and helps people to reach a better understanding of their situation and the options open to them.
- **Confidentiality** – If people feel safe, they are more likely to be open about their feelings.
- **Non-judgemental** – We want people to be able to talk to us without fear of prejudice or rejection.
- **People making their own decisions** – We believe that people have the right to find their own solutions and that telling people what to do takes responsibility away from them.
- **Human contact** – Giving people time, undivided attention and empathy meets a fundamental emotional need, and reduces distress and despair.

Fundraising

Fundraising and donations

In March 2020 we had a number of confirmed collections in our calendar, starting with Baldock MSA services and several Tesco superstores, together with 'pencilled-in' events at nine railway stations and street collections in Hitchin and Letchworth. National Covid lockdown prevented any of these taking place, and further restrictions meant that not one was undertaken for the whole financial year. This could have caused a serious impact on income. Many supporters of our charity, including both individuals and local organisations, came forward voluntarily wanting to support the branch. **Six Rotary Clubs** within North Hertfordshire and Stevenage made donations. This was a tremendous statement of the value of our branch to local people.

Towards the end of August, we ventured into new territory with a **Crowdfunder**. This was facilitated by **Aviva** and our connections with some of their employees. The Aviva Community Fund delivers funding and support for small charities all year round. Every three months, Aviva splits £250,000 among their UK employees, each of whom can donate their £25 voucher to the project that matters to them. Our **Crowdfunding page was widely advertised** and we know that many of our supporters donated and also encouraged family and friends to do so. **158 supporters**, along with the Aviva element of £1,675 and a donation from **Herts County Council's Community Innovation Fund** of £1,800, provided us with a worthwhile **£6,437**.

Hitchin Waitrose donated **£333** – a third share of the October Community Matters Scheme, and **John Lewis Cambridge** donated **£1,000**.

A couple of people took on the **Samarathon** in July 2020 and raised **£500** for the branch. This is a national event facilitated by Samaritans Central Office – a virtual marathon that's run around a person's life by simply walking, jogging or running 26.2 miles during the course of a month.

Hitchin's 'Fancy Dress Fundraiser', **Nicholas Jemetta**, ran a Fancy Dress Challenge of 'The 12 days of Christmas', which raised **£1,020** for our branch. Not only was this a great amount, but it also gave Samaritans and our branch exposure on BBC Look East, BBC1 and in the press. Over the year, **£4,000** has been received through **charitable donations**. This includes Nicholas's sponsorship but also other amounts.

Thanks to those who are taking a few extra seconds when ordering shopping on the internet to enable the branch to receive a contribution from many retailers. To do this, you can use:

Amazon Smile smile.amazon.co.uk/gp/chpf/homepage , or

GivingMachine www.thegivingmachine.co.uk

Web users have also donated via searching online for Samaritans of North Herts & Stevenage.

Lockdown seemed to give people time to search for their **foreign and old UK** coins and notes. We sent two batches for exchange, which raised **£205**. Hopefully, when we have additional freedoms, we may get enough to do a further exchange.

Thank you again everyone for your tremendous support, which has enabled our branch to remain fully operational despite the challenges and restrictions of the pandemic.

Supporters (not individuals)

Businesses with collecting cans

- Biggleswade Station Book Library (GTR staff and passengers)
- Brickyard, Bancroft, Hitchin
- Doghouse Grooming, Arlesey
- Toni & Guy, Hitchin
- The Bull, Whitwell
- Village Shop, Whitwell

Donations

- Aviva (Crowdfunding)
- Hertfordshire County Council Community Innovations Fund
- Hinxworth & Edworth Soup Lunch Club
- Rotary Club of Hitchin
- Rotary Club of Hitchin Priory
- Rotary Club of Hitchin Tilehouse
- Rotary Club of Royston
- Rotary Club of Stevenage Grange
- SETTLE Housing Association

Grants

- Hertfordshire County Council (POhWER)
- North Hertfordshire District Council (Covid – discretionary government grant)

Providers of 'in kind' or enabling services

We are very grateful to all the organisations that help us to carry out the work we do. This can be by direct donation or by providing 'in kind' services or materials.

- Galasso Signs Ltd, Hitchin
- Phillips Digital Print, Letchworth
- Satchells Estate Agents, Hitchin
- TPS Visual Communications, Letchworth Garden City

Donating

If you would like to help us, you can make a donation:

By bank transfer
Account name: Samaritans of North Herts & Stevenage
Account number: 63678547
Sort code: 20-05-73
Please quote your name as reference.

By cheque
Please make your cheque payable to 'Samaritans of North Herts & Stevenage' and send it to our branch address: 5 Nun's Close, Hitchin, SG5 1EP.

By text message
Text SAMSLOCAL 3 to 70460 to donate £3.
Texts cost £3 plus one standard rate message and you'll be opting in to hear more about our work and fundraising via telephone and SMS. If you'd like to give £3 but do not wish to receive marketing communications, text SAMSLOCALNOINFO 3 to 70460.

Caller support

In the year commencing April 2020, volunteers at Samaritans of North Herts & Stevenage offered emotional support via **13,268 phone calls** and **1,874 emails**, which compares favourably to the previous year, given the inevitably reduced number of hours we were able to open the branch.

Unfortunately, given pandemic safety precautions, we were unable to invite any callers into the branch for face-to-face emotional support.

External relations

Outreach and talks

In October 2020 we provided an unmanned branch display of awareness on two days at **Stevenage railway station** for an event organised by **Great Northern Rail.**

In December 2020 Holy Saviour Church Hitchin managed to organise its annual **Christmas Tree Festival** in conjunction with Hitchin BID. This enabled 50 trees to be displayed in a trail around the town centre. Our tree, **'The Brew Tree'**, was on display in a shop in Portmill Lane, and the proprietor allowed the tree to remain there until the New Year .

Through the use of Zoom, we remotely delivered a limited number of talks. The first, in September, was to the local **U3A**. In October there was a joint presentation with the Warrington, Halton & St Helens Samaritans branch to **'Lifetime'** of the Warrington Housing Association. In December talks were delivered to **Hertfordshire Police**, and to **Hitchin Priory Rotary** at their breakfast meeting. In January 2021, as part of the Samaritans national campaign, **Brew Monday**, we held a virtual event with **SETTLE**, the Letchworth-based housing association.

IT and comms

Responses to the Covid-19 virus have, as with many organisations, forced us to think differently.

The presence in the branch of any member of the IT team had to be carefully choreographed to maintain the spaces required to manage potential infection, making physical attendance for IT issues somewhat tricky. We have in this financial year experienced bouts of poor line quality with the ops room phones, which we are working hard to resolve in order to maintain fault-free service to our callers.

Funding from various sources has not only helped expedite essential changes to **remain operational**, but we have additionally **updated most of everything** – not only in the ops room, but also in the middle administrations room, where we have better phones and a more resilient network infrastructure. All in all, the IT team has coped well with a number of challenges, helped by our volunteers' willingness to cope with and report any issues.

Leaders

The Leader team is made up of listening volunteers who are willing to be available at times throughout the week, to support other volunteers during and after their listening shifts. Their **role is vital** in helping all of our volunteers to feel supported in case of any issues or questions relating to the innumerable procedures we need to follow, as well as to **take offloads** from and **provide emotional support to volunteers** after every shift.

During this period, despite the Covid lockdowns, the number of Leaders in the branch stayed more or less constant at about 18. Whereas we lost a few to rainbow leave (Covid isolation), we managed to maintain our cover of roughly 32 shifts per week, thanks to the dedication and generous time commitments of all our Leaders.

Partnerships

We continued to build on the partnerships we have with Hertfordshire & Bedfordshire Police and POhWER, delivered by Herts Help crisis Intervention Service Direct Support). We were available to **receive telephone referrals** from these partners, **24 hours a day, 7 days a week**.

Discussions commenced in November 2020 with Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust, to set up a **new partnership** with them to provide a complementary referral service for their service users who may be in emotional distress or experiencing suicidal feelings.

Herts and Beds police can still make referrals to us for **people who have been in custody** and who are experiencing emotional distress. After receiving messages on a dedicated phone line within the branch, our listening volunteers attempt three times to call anyone referred by the police, to offer emotional support.

Our partnerships enabled us to reach out to sections of the community that may not have come to us directly or been aware of the services Samaritans can offer. Building partnerships with like-minded organisations locally helped us reach out to groups at high risk of suicide.

Prisons

As part of our activities we identify, and try to work with, groups that have a high risk of suicide and self-harm. Prisoners are an **extremely vulnerable group** and the incidence of suicide and self-harm in prisons generally is on the increase. Prisons can be lonely, stressful, intimidating and scary places for some inmates, who need emotional support to get through.

Samaritans work **in conjunction with the safer custody teams** in most prisons in the UK, offering support by speaking to prisoners both in person, by way of a free to use Samaritans phone, as well as via a free and confidential correspondence service.

The Coronavirus pandemic has meant that our **visits to prisons were curtailed**, and this has highlighted that we cannot be there all the time to support prisoners. This is why we train and carefully select prisoners to be Listeners so that they can offer listening support to fellow inmates in person when they are in need. Listeners are unpaid, available 24/7 and give up their time freely to help those less able to cope with life inside. Together with colleagues in Samaritans Cambridge branch, some of our volunteers visit **Littlehey Prison in Cambridgeshire**. We support the Listener team on a weekly basis, helping them do their job as well as promoting the work we do jointly with them.

This has been a difficult year for us as Samaritans, frustrated that we have been unable to help, but also for the Listeners working under really difficult circumstances. We look forward to **resuming our regular visits** to the prison and to rebuilding a strong support team for vulnerable prisoners.

Publicity

We have had some **good press coverage** of events and activities over the year thanks to local media outlets, including the celebration of one of our volunteer's 50 years volunteering at the branch recognised publicly through the Dedication Award in the North Herts District Council's Chair's Volunteers Achievement Awards.

Our website is regularly updated and is worth perusing: www.samaritans.org/branches/hitchin

We also have a social media presence on Twitter. Follow us at twitter.com/NorthHertsSams

Recruitment

The process to recruit and select volunteers needed to be reconsidered when the first restrictions happened due to the pandemic. The selection team quickly moved to hold both **information evenings and selection interviews** online, using Zoom. Initially, there were concerns about whether interviewers would be able to select as carefully as they had been used to when they met potential volunteers face to face. However, the team quickly found that selection decisions were very similar to as they had known them.

New recruits to the selection team undertake the central office training, which particularly helps challenge potential volunteers' underlying preconceptions and supports a broad view of their suitability. Selectors always work in pairs. This helps new selectors and ensures careful consideration of each applicant.

Potential volunteers are invited to an information evening where the role of a volunteer is explained, alongside the approach of the organisation to important issues of self-determination and volunteers avoiding both self-disclosure and offering advice. A particularly important part of the process at this stage is making clear the time involved in being a listening volunteer, i.e. four shifts every four weeks, including a night shift.

Following the information evening, potential volunteers are invited to submit a simple application form that leads to an interview. For successful applicants, two references are then taken up alongside a DBS check. There is generally a wait of a few months for the next training place.

During this financial year, **30 new listening volunteers** were recruited.

Recruitment of specific roles as support volunteers took place via recruitment websites. This led particularly to the successful recruitment of a health and safety expert to oversee our premises.

Rota

Samaritans are proud to provide a **24/7 telephone listening service** across the UK and ROI. Not all of the 201 branches are open all the time but our phone distribution system means that every caller should have their call answered whenever they call.

In the Samaritans of North Herts & Stevenage branch we have a strong and reliable team of up to **90 volunteers** available for listening duties. There is a tremendous support mechanism and illustrates how we can make our rota work for us and our callers.

We operate a shift system, dividing each 24 hours into seven shifts of between three and four hours. We do not have enough volunteers to cover every shift, but on average each of our listening volunteers will do at least three hours on duty each week. This enables us to cover **30 or more shifts per week**.

During lockdown, Samaritans was classed as an essential volunteering service so our branch was able to open with a maximum of two volunteers in the premises at any one time and subject to all necessary hygiene precautions. A number of volunteers had to shield or isolate during that period so some hours were reduced but we did maintain the service as much as we were able.

Volunteers 'self-rota', i.e. select their own shifts, using our online system. This enables them to choose their own shifts about three weeks before the start of every four-week rota period. They are expected to do one overnight shift, a weekend shift and two other shifts within any rota period. If a volunteer becomes unable to do a shift, we have an excellent online facility for swapping a shift with another volunteer, so losing as few as possible.

Our volunteers come from very different backgrounds and occupations, but we all are comprehensively trained and are **working together as a team** to produce the best service we can to those in need of our help.

Training

Prior to the pandemic, our initial training for new volunteers was always delivered face to face, so Samaritans faced a new challenge nationwide from March 2020. Thankfully, our SCO (Samaritans Central Office) training team soon created **new Core training** (initial training for new volunteers) to be delivered virtually.

It was challenging to adjust to this entirely new way of delivering training, but our training team coped amazingly well with the changes. Following a brief pause, we resumed Core training, delivered over Zoom. Indeed, we have found a number of advantages of training online, and we had a total of 16 new volunteers fully trained and ready to start listening shifts during this year, with a further 8 starting training in March 2020. This helped to **clear the backlog** of new recruits, with numbers having risen since the start of lockdown.

Ongoing training had to be paused temporarily due to the pandemic. But as soon as possible, and just before the end of this financial year, our new deputy director for training delivered four sessions via Zoom, using breakout rooms for smaller group discussion and skills practice. This was offered to all listening volunteers, the vast majority of whom signed up to refresh their knowledge and skills on the vital subject of safeguarding. We look forward to running more of these sessions on various topics in the next financial year.

A huge thanks to every member of the training team who has made all of this possible.

Volunteer support

Covid-19 brought many new challenges in supporting our volunteers. In line with NHS and government guidelines and restrictions, everything possible was done to ensure our branch was made '**Covid safe**' so volunteers felt safe to be in the branch and deliver support to our callers. This included full sanitisation equipment to reduce risk of transmission, more frequent cleaning of the branch, and the requirement for volunteers to maintain two-metre social distancing while in the branch. One of our volunteers arranged for us to have a clear plastic barrier installed at one of our duty stations, to increase spacing and safety for new volunteers and their mentors on duty together. Also, following instructions from SCO, we introduced a 30-minute gap between shifts in order to reduce contact between volunteers; those who were able to continue with listening shifts within the branch saw only their shift partner while on duty, before thoroughly sanitising duty stations, etc, and leaving the branch before the next volunteers arrived.

Around 20% of our volunteers needed to go on '**rainbow leave**' – temporary leave due to Covid health concerns. Since March 2020, this was **actively encouraged** for anyone who needed to shield or felt unsafe. Volunteers on rainbow leave still received emails and other communications from the branch, helping them to feel connected, and they were contacted regularly to see how they were coping. Similarly, we kept in touch with volunteers on longer-term leave of absence. We experienced an average number of leavers from our branch in this financial year – 11, with 2 moving to other branches – balanced by the number of new recruits.

Supporting the volunteers in the branch is vitally important so that we all feel **valued and appreciated**, which in turn helps with **retention** and, ultimately, optimum levels of support for our callers. Volunteers are encouraged to ask for support whenever they need it, and we do all we can to enable them to do this easily.

Financial review

The financial statements cover the 12 months to 31 March 2021. Total income amounted to £60,908, compared with £39,243 in the previous year. Despite a drop in self-generated income due to the restrictions imposed by Covid, we benefited from a significant increase in donations, for which we were very grateful in such a challenging year.

Income specifically from grants was £29,440 in 2020/21, compared to £6,000 in the previous year. This comprised a grant of £11,840, representing generous funding from The Pears Charitable Trust and £6,100 in grants from North Herts District council. The total of £17,940 was used to create a great new work area, adding two new stations for listening and chat volunteers and making the branch safer during the lockdown period. POhWER contributed significantly, increased grants totalling £11,500 in the year.

Total expenditure of £41,532has also increased against the previous year of £35,101. Costs were incurred in making the branch safe for volunteers during lockdown and in establishing a second operations room for online chat. The increase in expenditure was less than it might have been because we did not incur costs that we would expect to in a more normal year for our outreach and other activities. Governance costs of £17,990 include £14,888 of contribution to SCO, due under our operating agreement with them.

The operating surplus for the year, before gains on investment, amounted to £19,376 compared with £4,142 in 2019/20. £5,220 of the surplus relates to funds designated for the creation of a new operations room. This work was completed and funds spent at the time of writing this report.

The accumulated general reserves, which exclude fixed assets, amounted to £84,915 (19/20: £102,126), which, in representing more than one year's normal expenditure, is considered by the trustees to adequately meet the needs of the branch for the foreseeable future. The total net assets of £129,340 is held in both bank deposits and investments (the latter valued at £80,118 at 31 March 2021). The trustees are mindful of a need to move to premises when a suitable property becomes available and are maintaining reserves for this purpose (see 'Future plans' below).

The title to the freehold premises is held by Samaritans as custodian trustee and the charity to subject to a trust deed in respect of these premises.

Reserves

The trustees reviewed and updated the Financial Reserves Policy in the year since the last report and agreed a minimum level of 6 months and a maximum of 18 months of free reserves, to allow the branch to continue operating without financial income for that period without releasing long-term reserves or requiring assistance from SCO. This has been monitored on a regular basis. The trustees will continue to review the reserves policy on an annual basis.

In the period from March 2020, the trustees have taken full account of the Charity Commission advice on the use of reserves. Cash flow projections indicate that Samaritans of North Herts & Stevenage will end the financial year (2021/22) with unrestricted funds above the minimum reserves level.

Risk management

The trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed. At their meetings, they carry out this duty and ensure appropriate controls are in place and any necessary action is taken to mitigate such risks.

At the beginning of March 2020, the trustees followed guidance from SCO to enable us to remain operational as an essential service during lockdown. Arrangements dealt with risks and issues relevant to the early stages of the Covid-19 situation. This specifically addressed:

- health risks to service users and volunteers
- protocols to avoid infection in the work place
- defined and Covid-19 risk assessments completed for our branch

As the situation developed over the following months, trustees received regular updates and responded to these changes. A risk register was put in place early in the 2021/22 year to build upon this planning in respect of operational risk.

We are pleased to report that we were able to deliver training remotely. Although we had to cease face-to-face support and outreach activity, we have maintained priority shifts and a high number of normal listening shifts throughout the year. Our safety measures continue to include the measures for Covid safety and for people who need support.

Future plans

Cash flow estimates indicate Samaritans of North Herts & Stevenage will maintain the minimum reserves level throughout 2021/22 whilst meeting all financial commitments.

At the time of writing, all restrictions had been lifted in England since 19 July 2021. Trustees continue to monitor the situation and implications for Samaritans of North Herts & Stevenage through regular (online) meetings and with guidance from SCO. We hope to be able to gradually resume face-to-face support, our outreach activities and fundraising over the coming months, when it can be done ensuring the safety of both service users and volunteers.

The trustees have begun discussing the need to find a property more suited to the long-term growth of the branch. At the time of writing this report, no suitable property has been identified; but the level of reserves reflect the recognition that additional funds will be required to make such a move and to ensure it is adapted to the needs of volunteers and callers.

Structure, governance and management

Samaritans of North Herts & Stevenage became a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO), governed by constitution, on 22 June 2017. Trustees have a limit of six-year terms, except the director, who serves a three-year term, which can be extended by up to 12 months by the approval of SCO's board of trustees.

The day-to-day operation of the activities of the branch are controlled by the director, with the support of deputy directors. The director serves a term of three years and is appointed by the branch committee, under the recommendation of a consensus of the members of the branch and with approval from SCO.

The trustee committee is responsible for fundraising, the approval of expenditure, and the maintenance of the branch premises and equipment. Committee members/trustees are either elected or ex officio and serve as trustees for a period of no more than six years. Ex-officio committee members are appointed or stand down at the annual general meeting each year.

The trustees normally meet five times a year. However, since the beginning of April 2020, the trustees have ensured that the branch has remained current with the changing advice and legislation around Covid, the impact on Samaritans activities and the operational implications. All trustee meetings since January 2020 have used Zoom, initially because the interim director lived too far away to make face-to-face meetings possible, and then because of Covid restrictions and precautions. However, all meetings met constitutional and legal requirements.

Recruitment

Hilary Ashley ceased her role as interim director on 1 January 2021 and Ilsa Hawtin was appointed as branch director and chair of trustees on 1 January 2021.

New trustees are identified either through an open recruitment from the membership base, or by recommendation or selection for their particular skills and abilities. Appointments are subject to the approval of a quorum of members. On appointment, new trustees are provided with the information recommended by the Charity Commission and have Samaritans-specific training as well as access to general trustee training, provided as part of their induction.

Governance

Over the 12 months of this report, the trustees carried out regular reviews of Samaritans standard policies as required by SCO and were able to advise to SCO that we are adhering to central guidance regarding governance, finance, data protection and health & safety.

Samaritans of North Herts & Stevenage does not employ professional fundraisers in any capacity and did not carry out any face-to-face fundraising in the year. No complaints regarding fundraising were received for the period of this report.

Statement of trustees' responsibilities

The trustees are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom accounting standards. The Charity Commission requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- observe the principles in the Charities SORP 2019
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity to enable them, as a matter of good practice, to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP 2019) applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Statement FRS 102. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Reference and administration – 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021

Samaritans of North Herts & Stevenage – registered charity number 1173578

The committee members who served as trustees in the period were as follows:

Hilary Ashley	Director	Term of office ceased 1 January 2021
Ilsa Hawtin	Director	Appointed 1 January 2021
Peter George		Resigned 3 September 2020
Graham Sutton	Treasurer	Appointed 31 January 2020, Re-appointed 6 October 2020
Barbara Haines		Re-appointed 6 October 2020
Steven Harrison		Re-appointed 6 October 2020
Valerie Docking		Re-appointed 6 October 2020
Alan Chaney		Appointed 6 October 2020
Jan Gosling		Re-appointed 6 October 2020
Pat Salmon		Resigned 31 July 2020
Jude Brooks		Appointed 1 November 2020
Sandra Oakes		Appointed 1 November 2020

Charity bank account	Barclays Bank, Leicester, LE87 2BB
Independent examiner	Jayne Whitfield, 5 Luard Close, CB2 8PL (Appointed 6 October 2020)
Charity registered address	5 Nun's Close, Hitchin, Herts, SG5 1EP
Contact telephone number	N/A
Website	www.samaritans.org/branches/hitchin

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report on pages 2 to 11.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:

Signed: 

Date: 1/12/21

(Signature of authorised person)

Ilsa Hawtin, chair of trustee board
(Name and position of authorised person)

Signed: 

Date: 27/11/21

(Signature of authorised person)

Graham Sutton, treasurer
(Name and position of authorised person)

Independent examiner's report

to the trustees of Samaritans of North Herts & Stevenage, charity number 1173578

I report to the trustees of Samaritans of North Herts & Hitchin on my examination of the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2021.

Respective responsibilities and basis of report

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

I report in respect of my examination of the charity's accounts carried out under Section 145 of the 2011 Act; and in carrying out my examination I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commissioners under Section 145 (5) (b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

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

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records.

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

Signed: Date:

7/12/21

Jayne Whitfield, 5 Luard Close, CB2 8PL

Statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 March 2021

	Note	Fixed asset cover fund £	Designated general fund	Unrestricted general fund £	2020/21 total funds £	2019/20 total funds £
Incoming resources from generated funds						
Voluntary income						
Prison Income		-	-	-1,040	-1,040	1,812
Donations		-	-	22,928	22,928	8,176
Generated income including from Friends of Samaritans		-	-	9,580	9,580	23,255
Grants income		-	17,940	11,500	29,440	6,000
Total incoming resources from charitable activities		-	**17,940**	**42,968**	**60,908**	**39,243**
Resources expended						
Costs of generating funds	3	-	-	2,440	2,440	1,755
Charitable activities	4	-	12,720	8,382	21,102	19,398
Governance costs	5	-	-	17,990	17,990	14,008
Total resources expended		-	**12,720**	**28,812**	**41,532**	**35,101**
Net (outgoing) incoming resources for the year		-	**5,220**	**14,156**	**19,376**	**4,142**
Gain on investment		-		1,202	1,202	2,494
Net movement in funds			**5,220**	**15,358**	**20,578**	**6,636**
Funds brought forward		**17,601**	**6,246**	**84,915**	**108,762**	**102,126**
Funds carried forward		**17,601**	**11,466**	**100,273**	**129,340**	**108,762**

Balance sheet at 31 MARCH 2021

	Note	31 March 2021 £	31 March 2021 £	31 March 2020 £	31 March 2020 £
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	6		17,601		17,601
Listed investment funds	7		80,118		78,916
			97,719		**96,517**
Current assets					
Prepaid expenses		0		2,327	
Sundry debtors		6,867		4,521	
Short-term bank deposits (at 31/3/2021)		44,366		15,686	
		51,233		22,534	
Creditors: amounts falling due within year		19,612		10,289	
Net current assets			31,621		12,245
Net assets			**129,340**		**108,762**
Represented by :					
Unrestricted funds					
General funds			100,273		84,915
Designated funds			11,466		6,246
Fixed asset cover fund			17,601		17,601
			129,340		**108,762**

These financial statements were approved by the trustees on 8 November 2021 and signed on its behalf by:

(Ilsa Hawtin, chair of trustees)

(Graham Sutton, treasurer)

Notes to the accounts

Accounting policies

(a) These accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention as modified by the revaluation of investments to market value and in accordance with applicable accounting standards and the Statement of Recommended Practice on Accounting by Charities ("the Charities SORP").

(b) Voluntary income received by way of donations and gifts is included in the statement of financial activities (the "SOFA") when received. Gifts in kind are valued and brought in as income.

(c) Gross fund-raising income from events organised by the charity itself is included in the SOFA when received. Where deemed material, fund-raising proceeds not yet received by the charity at the year-end have also been taken to income at the trustees' estimate of likely receivable amount.

(d) Covenant, gift aid and other income received by the charity in respect of which a claim for payment of tax has or will be made is grossed up for the tax recoverable and the gross amount recognised in the SOFA.

(e) Income from legacies is included in the SOFA when received or when the trustees are satisfied the charity has a legally enforceable right of receipt of a conservatively measured sum.

(f) Revenue grants for immediate financial support and assistance are recognised in the SOFA on receipt and on satisfaction of pre-conditions.

(g) Net fund-raising income raised by Friends of Samaritans of North Herts & Stevenage is recognised in the SOFA on receipt by the charity as part of the Friends overall contribution, and the associated fund-raising costs separately disclosed in a note.

(h) Premises overheads are aggregated and allocated to the various functional activities of the charity on a percentage basis determined by the trustees and disclosed in a note.

(i) Any costs which cannot be specifically identified to another functional activity of the charity are included in the management and administration function.

(j) Depreciation is provided on all tangible fixed assets of material value held by the charity for its own use on a straight line basis so as to write off their cost over their estimated useful lives as follows:

Freehold property	Nil
Building renovation costs	20% p.a.
Office equipment and furniture	20% p.a.

(k) No provision for taxation is included in the accounts as the charity is entitled to the exemption from tax afforded by Section 505 of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988.

(l) Funds held by the charity are either :

- unrestricted general funds - these are funds that can be used in accordance with the charitable objects at the discretion of the trustees.

- Designated funds - these are funds set aside by the trustees out of unrestricted general funds for specific future purposes or projects.

- Restricted funds - these are funds than 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.

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2021

		2020/21	2020/21	2019/20
		Unrestricted	Total	Total
2.	**Premises overheads**	£	£	£

Rates and water rates	325	325	435
Power and heat	2,761	2,761	2,936
Repairs and renewals	7,266	7,266	5,735
Cleaning and housekeeping	3,794	3,794	2,106
Equipment repairs and replacements	3,903	3,903	1,022
IT Support	5,315	5,315	1,623
Office telephone and postage	222	222	2,871
Insurance and legal costs	813	813	818
Total for the year	24,400	24,400	17,546
Allocated to :			
Costs of generating funds	2,440	2,440	1,755
Charitable activities	19,520	19,520	14,037
Governance costs	2,440	2,440	1,755
Total allocations for the year	24,400	24,400	17,547

3. **Costs of generating funds**

	£	£	£
Share of premises overheads (see note 2)	2,440	2,440	1,755
Total for the year	2,440	2,440	1,755

4. Charitable activities	£	£	£
Emergency telephone	534	534	547
Volunteer travel expenses	686	686	518
Volunteer training	326	326	1,668
HMPP Recoverables	37	37	0
Outreach	0		0
Conference fees	0	0	2,568
Visitors expenses	0	0	0
Share of premises overheads (see note 2)	19,520	19,520	14,037
Total for the year	21,102	21,102	19,338

5. Governance costs			
Printing, stationery and photocopying	0	0	0
Contribution to Central Office support costs	14,888	14,888	11,336
Gifts and sundry expenses	663	663	917
Share of premises overheads (see note 2)	2,440	2,440	1,755
Total for the year	17,990	17,990	14,008

6. Tangible fixed assets

	Freehold property	Building renovation costs	Office equipment & furniture	Total
	£	£	£	£
Cost				
At 1 April 2020	17,601	14,808	13,173	45,582
Additions	-	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2021	17,601	14,808	13,173	45,582
Depreciation				
At 1 April 2020	-	14,808	13,173	27,981
Charge for the period	-	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2021	-	14,808	13,173	27,981
Net book value				
At 1 April 2020	17,601	-	-	17,601
At 31 March 2021	17,601	-	-	17,601

7. Listed investment funds

	Cost	Market value
	£	£
At 1 April 2020	48,148	78,916
Purchases of investment	0	0
Change in market value	0	1,202
At 31 March 2021	48,148	80,118

8. Trustees' remuneration and expenses

None of the charity's trustees were directly or indirectly remunerated in any way. it is the policy of the charity to reimburse in full all expenses properly incurred by its volunteers in connection with its charitable activities. During the year, the total amount reimbursed to the trustees and members of the charity's management committee in respect of travel costs for attending meetings, telephone, postage and similar expenses is included in note 4.

9. Indemnity insurance

Samaritans has centrally effected professional indemnity insurance to protect employees, trustees, members of the charity's management committee and other