

# 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](http://www.thegivingmachine.co.uk); or **Easyfundraising**, [www.easyfundraising.org.uk](http://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 2023.

Our website is regularly updated and is worth perusing: [www.samaritans.org/branches/hitchin](http://www.samaritans.org/branches/hitchin)

We also have a social media presence on Twitter. Follow us at [twitter.com/NorthHertsSams](https://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](http://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).

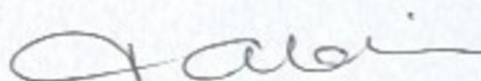
I report in respect of my examination of the charity's accounts carried out under Section 145 of the 2011 Act; and in carrying out my examination I have followed the applicable directions given by the Charity Commissioners under Section 145 (5) (b) of the act.

### 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

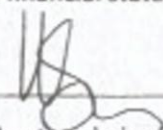
	Notes	Fixed asset cover fund £	Designated general fund £	Unrestricted general fund £	2022/23 Total funds £	2021/22 Total funds £
<b>Incoming resources from generated funds</b>						
Christmas cards		-	-	101	101	98
Interest income		-	-	2,087	2,087	2,516
Donations		-	-	8,635	8,635	851
Generated income,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



Balance sheet at 31 MARCH 2023

	Notes	31 Mar 2023 £	31 Mar 2022 £
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>			
<b>Tangible assets</b>			
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)
<b>Total tangible assets</b>	6	<b>21,722</b>	<b>20,380</b>
Fixed asset investment	7	67,997	76,357
<b>Total fixed assets</b>		<b>89,719</b>	<b>96,737</b>
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
<b>Cash at bank and in hand</b>			
Barclays Community Account 63678547		5,459	8,418
Debtors	8	3,308	3,056
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>8,767</b>	<b>11,474</b>
<b>CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR</b>			
Creditors	9	12,488	5,002
<b>Total creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b>		<b>12,488</b>	<b>5,002</b>
<b>Net current assets</b>		<b>(3,721)</b>	<b>6,472</b>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		<b>85,998</b>	<b>103,209</b>
<b>Net assets</b>		<b>85,998</b>	<b>103,209</b>
<b>CAPITAL AND RESERVES</b>			
Designated funds		54,058	5,020
Fixed asset cover fund		17,601	17,601
General funds		14,339	80,588
<b>Total capital and reserves</b>		<b>85,998</b>	<b>103,209</b>

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 that 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
<b>1. PREMISES OVERHEADS</b>				
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
<b>Total for the year</b>	<b>481</b>	<b>10,492</b>	<b>10,973</b>	<b>19,269</b>
<b>Allocated to:</b>				
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
<b>Total allocations for the year</b>	<b>481</b>	<b>10,492</b>	<b>10,973</b>	<b>19,269</b>
<b>2. COSTS OF GENERATING FUNDS</b>				
Share of premises overheads (see detail 1)	49	1,049	1,098	1,927
<b>Total for the year</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>1,049</b>	<b>1,098</b>	<b>1,927</b>
<b>3. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES</b>				
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
<b>Total activities</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>15,679</b>	<b>15,679</b>	<b>6,781</b>
Share of premises overheads (see detail 1)	383	8,394	8,777	15,415
<b>Total for the year</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>24,073</b>	<b>24,456</b>	<b>22,196</b>



	£	£	£	£
	2022/23 designated	2022/23 unrestricted	2022/23 total	2021/22 total
<b>4. SUPPORT COSTS</b>				
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	-
<b>Total activities</b>		<b>5,614</b>	<b>5,614</b>	<b>8,037</b>
Share of premises overheads (see note 2)	49	1,049	1,098	1,927
<b>Total for the year</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>6,663</b>	<b>6,712</b>	<b>9,964</b>

2022/23	2021/22
£	£

**5. STAFF COSTS**

Salaries	2,244	-
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No employee received emoluments in excess of £60,000.

**6. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS**

	Freehold property £	Building renovation £	Office equipment & furniture £	Total £
<b>Cost</b>				
At 1 April 2022	17,601	14,808	16,647	49,056
Additions	-	-	2,546	2,546
Disposals	-	-	-	-
<b>At 31 March 2023</b>	<b>17,601</b>	<b>14,808</b>	<b>19,193</b>	<b>51,602</b>
<b>Depreciation</b>				
At 1 April 2022	-	14,808	13,868	28,676
Charge for the period	-	-	1,204	1,204
Disposals	-	-	-	-
<b>At 31 March 2023</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>14,808</b>	<b>15,072</b>	<b>29,880</b>
<b>Net book value</b>				
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)
<b>At 31 March 2023</b>	<b>48,148</b>	<b>67,997</b>

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

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

#### 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.



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