

Directors Report
Leek & District Samaritans
AGM 2024

Every Branch is only as good as the Volunteers within it, and I believe that Leek is an excellent example of this adage. So, a BIG thankyou from me to all the Leek Volunteers for everything that you do inside and outside of the Branch supporting those Callers in need, and spreading the name of the Branch locally. It remains a privilege to be part of such a strong Volunteering team in Leek.

Sadly, we have lost a long standing and loyal Volunteer this year with the recent sudden passing of Pat Axon. Pat fulfilled a large number of roles at Leek over the 24 years that she was with us and will be missed greatly by all in the Branch. Our thoughts and condolences are extended to Jeff, Pat's Husband, and family.

One of the reasons we are here as Volunteers is to provide a safe space to those callers who are struggling with life's issues, some of which could affect anyone of us at some point in our lives. Each factor can seem overwhelming at times to Callers, and your ability to 'just listen', provide empathy and not be judgemental should never be underestimated.

Life can also 'catch-up' with us as Volunteers, and we wish a speedy recovery to all our Volunteers who have struggled this year with illness, and those where family, work and other factors have meant that a rest period, or to step down from Volunteering, has been required. We are fortunate as a Branch to have Joy587 stepping into the role as Volunteer Support DD, and providing Volunteers with the 'internal' support that is required when needed most. With our limited Volunteer numbers, and an extremely small 'catchment' area for new Volunteers it is important that we focus on ensuring that our existing Volunteers are fully supported.

We know that recruitment is becoming more and more difficult, but we remain focused on trying every avenue possible within our existing resources to boost our volunteer numbers. We appreciate too that 'life' and 'volunteering' has changed dramatically over the past few years and as a Branch and Organisation we will have to learn to be able to accommodate this, whilst not forgetting the contribution that long-standing Volunteers have, and continue, to make.

As last year, financially as an affiliated Branch of the larger Samaritans organisation, we also have to self-fund ourselves and as with the general increase in the cost of living that is also proving to be both challenging and time consuming. Leek, however has an extremely strong community spirit and it is apparent that Leek Samaritans are well-respected within the local community. As such the current financial position of the Branch remains healthy.

Thank you to the Branch Leadership Team and Trustees without whose hard work behind the scenes the Branch would struggle. Thanks also to each and every Leek Volunteer, in every capacity in every 'team' vital to ensure that the Branch operates in line with the Organisations requirements, be that, Recruitment, Interviewing, Training, Mentoring, OGT, Leader, Fundraising, IT, Rota, Volunteer Support, Caller Support, Outreach, Grants, Treasurer & Secretary. Opportunities always exist for new Volunteers to join all the existing Teams, so never be shy to express an interest.

Currently, the Branch is in the final stages of the Branch Director Selection process and we are hopeful that an announcement will be made very soon.

There will be a large number of Volunteers attending the West Midlands Regional Conference at Yarnfield in October. Leek pro-rata for the number of Volunteers in Branch will have the highest number of attendees.

Leek & District Branch Priorities for 2025

- Maintain existing Volunteer numbers, and ensure Volunteers are supported
- New Volunteer recruitment
- Re-instate Caller Email Service
- Introduction of the Samaritans Listening Centre replacing the Link System
- Maintain 'Hours of Need' night shifts
- Preparations for the Branches 60th Anniversary in 2026

THANK YOU once again to all Volunteers without whom the Branch would not function.

Dave600
Interim Branch Director

Leek & District Samaritans
08 09 2024

Leek & District Samaritans
Charity number 1173725

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Leek & District Samaritans for the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charities Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a "true and fair" view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the requirements to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act and to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met; or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Mr G Graham, Independent Examiner

Mr D Lewis, Acting Director