



ALTON COUNSELLING SERVICE

ANNUAL REPORT and ACCOUNTS

2020-2021

Alton Counselling Service

For the financial year ended 31 March 2021

1. Trustees and their Advisers

Board of Trustees

Anne Bothwell (Chair)
Ann Brosnan
Graham Hill
Fiona Lapraik

Counsellors' Representative

Alison Curry

Consultant Psychiatrist & Clinical Adviser

Dr Paul Warren, BM, MRCPsych

Independent Examiner

E.M.Mackeggie Gurney, ACA

Management Board

| | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| Head of Counselling | Dorothy Harte |
| Treasurer | Andrew Croom-Johnson |
| Service Manager | Lissa Morris |

Bankers

HSBC Bank,
Lansdowne House, 74 High Street,
Alton,
GU34 1EZ

Premises

Quaker Meeting House,
Church Street,
Alton
GU34 2DA

Tel: 01420 89207

Web: www.altoncounselling.org.uk

Alton Counselling Service

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2. Structure, Governance and Management

Alton Counselling Service (ACS) was established in 1974 as charity number 279857. The governing trust deed of 6 February 1980 was subsequently amended by a deed of variation dated 7 December 2010.

The Trustees are responsible for the governance of ACS. They are initially elected and thereafter confirmed in post annually. The Trustees are unpaid volunteers who may claim reasonable out-of-pocket expenses. The Trustees help to reconcile competing demands faced by the charity. They work with the Management Board to set the strategic direction and major areas of work. The day-to-day management is delegated to the Management Board comprising the Head of Counselling, the Treasurer and the Service Manager. The Trustees meet at least four times a year and the Management Board meets at least ten times a year. Both Trustees and the Management Board may meet more often if circumstances require. The Trustees have put in place a reserves policy and financial systems to reduce as far as possible financial risk, and work closely with the Management Board to preserve and promote ACS. Professional indemnity and public liability insurances are maintained. The service operates to BACP guidelines to minimise clinical risk.

ACS provides high-quality affordable counselling for the local community and to the highest ethical and professional standards. Clients are expected to make a contribution to cover the cost of their counselling, but no one is refused counselling for financial reasons. The service ensures confidentiality and a safe environment that give clients the opportunity to talk through the difficulties they are encountering. These might include:

- ☐ feeling unhappy, lonely, anxious or depressed
- ☐ being in need of understanding or support
- ☐ finding it difficult to relate to others
- ☐ lacking self-confidence
- ☐ facing a personal crisis, such as bereavement or relationship break-down
- ☐ undergoing major changes, such as redundancy or retirement

Each counsellor is part of a supervision group meeting weekly to review client work. Any unresolved or difficult issues are referred to the Head of Counselling and, where appropriate, the Consultant Psychiatrist & Clinical Adviser.

The Service relies on volunteers in all areas of work. Counsellors work on a voluntary basis, though experienced counsellors receive a modest payment in lieu of expenses. The Treasurer, Receptionists and others work without payment. Everyone who works in ACS has a meeting at least once a year with the person to whom they are responsible, with the opportunity to express their views on the operation of ACS. There was a Christmas

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social event. The Trustees send quarterly newsletters to all members of the service.

3. Objectives

The charity's objectives as stated in the trust deed, as amended, are:

- To provide counselling to those seeking help for emotional and psychological difficulties in accordance with current best practice
- To research the theory and practice of counselling and to publish the result of this research where appropriate
- To offer training and development opportunities in counselling to qualified and trainee counsellors.

4. Review of Clinical Practice

We currently have nineteen counsellors and there have been no changes of personnel during the year.

Everyone has worked hard throughout the lockdowns and we have been able to maintain the service through a combination of online using Zoom and telephone work. The supervisors have run their groups on Zoom in the usual weekly format.

As we look to the future it does seem likely that we will be continuing to offer both online work and telephone counselling alongside of face-to-face work. This will involve us all in exploring the best way forward. Some clients will prefer to remain online whilst others will want face to face work and many of the counsellors will find themselves adapting to a "new normal". We are beginning to look at how this can be both safely and practically achieved.

Everyone has worked so hard throughout the pandemic and we are very grateful for that. Now we need to look at the new challenges and continue to move through the next transition stage as a cohesive group.

I believe we have the imagination and capacity for reflection which we enable us to do this. Thank you everyone for your efforts.

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5. Treasurer's report

Financial review

The end of year accounts show a loss for the year of £2,646.

The Covid pandemic has affected our finances this financial year. Income from Counselling Sessions/Initial consultations has reduced and with counselling sessions having moved only online or by telephone some clients have paused their sessions. A proportion of our clients have suffered financial difficulties during the year and have had to reduce their contributions towards session costs. We have however been successful in obtaining a Grant to enable us to increase the number of clients on our bursary scheme to offset this.

We have again run a programme of Training Courses during the financial year all via Zoom. They have been well attended by our own counsellors as well as external counsellors. By using Zoom participants have not had to travel to Alton and we have had Counsellors join Training Courses from other parts of the country. Further Training Courses have been planned for this financial year.

We have been unable to run any fundraising events due to the ongoing pandemic.

Our Operating Expenses continue to be carefully monitored and managed. Most of our Operating Expenses are fixed costs, but we received a Grant to enable us to refund our Counsellors for the cost of their annual Zoom fees. Although we have been unable to use our office in the Quaker Meeting House, our administrator has worked from home, we have continued to pay rent but we have not incurred the costs of renting additional space as we would normally do.

HMRC/PAYE

We have continued to use the HMRC supplied RTI software to manage our payroll and NIC payments. This continues to be trouble free and has ensured that we meet our obligations to HMRC in a timely manner.

Credit card system

The Worldpay (formally Cardsave) virtual terminal credit card system continues to meet our credit card processing needs. In October 2020 we renewed compliance to the Payment Card Industries Digital Security Standards as required by Worldpay.

Employee Pensions

Alton Counselling Service

For the financial year ended 31 March 2021

We are registered with The Pensions Regulator regarding workplace pension law (Pensions Act 2008) for our only employee. We have a Workplace Pension Scheme with NEST.

Reserve account

Reserve funds continue to be held in a Charity Deposit account with Virgin Money, paying 0.15% interest as at 31st March 2021.

6. Trustees' Commentary

Financial stability

The financial position continues to be stable. Reserves now stand at £16,726, comfortably above the Reserves Policy level, which has now been increased to £5,000. During this pandemic we have taken on many clients unable to pay the full amount and have been grateful to the grants we have received that have enabled us to help these clients. Numbers are carefully monitored by the Management Board and regularly reported to the Trustees. Trainings have been offered online and have proved very successful.

Management Board

The Trustees are grateful to Dorothy Harte, Andrew Croom-Johnson and Lissa Morris for taking on additional workload including the set up and maintenance of zoom accounts and on line meetings, trainings etc.

Outlook

The office has continued to be closed throughout this year. After a brief lull there has been an increase in Initial Consultations and, while there are spaces for more clients, counsellors are working to 65% capacity. We have a small waiting list of clients who prefer to wait until face-to-face counselling is resumed. Lissa sends regular updates to these clients. There has been much discussion on future working practices, with some counsellors expressing a wish to continue with online counselling only, while others wish for a combination of online and face-to-face counselling when this is again possible. This approach is welcomed by trustees and we feel that this brings flexibility to what we can offer as a service. Trainings online have proved very successful and we plan to continue this as it draws in a wider range of attendees as they do not have to travel to a particular venue.

Fundraising and Grants

We express our gratitude to the organisations and individuals that made grants and donations during the year. We are especially grateful to HIWCF for their grant of £5000 and to EHDC for their grant of £6000; these have helped defray costs due to the pandemic and to help clients suffering financial hardship. We are also grateful to Alton Masons for their donation

Alton Counselling Service

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of £250. The membership of Friends of Alton Counselling Service is in abeyance at the moment.

Accreditation

Alton Counselling Service is accredited with the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and is registered by the British Psychoanalytic Council (BPC).

Networks and external links

We are members of the National Counselling Network (NCN) and Alton Charities Together (ACT). The Trustees accepted invitations for interviews on Wey Valley Radio to talk about the service in general. We have contacts with various members of the Town Council and growing contacts with other local groups through advertising and written articles.

7. Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The Trustees are required to prepare an annual report and financial statements for each financial year. These statements should give a true and fair view of the charity's financial activities during the year and its financial position at the end of the year. In preparing these financial statements the Trustees have:

- ☐ selected suitable accounting policies and then applied them consistently
- ☐ made judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- ☐ taken responsibility for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

 **Signed:**

Anne Bothwell, Chair of Trustees

Date: 28/4/2021

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Charity Commission registered number: 279857

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Clinical Organization

Head of Counselling

Dorothy Harte

Clinical Supervisors

Alison Curry
Jeremy Hughes
Stanley Roman

Consultant Psychiatrist & Clinical Adviser

Dr Paul Warren, BM, MRCPsych

Counsellors

The following counsellors have made themselves available to ACS during the year:

Sophia Armstrong
Tony Boorman
Paul Brand
Susan Buesnal
Alison Curry

Nikki Figgins
Jeremy Hughes
Mandy Keene
Pete Smith
Jaye Turley

Nicky Barnett (student)
Karen Bushell (student)
Cathy Harding (student)
Rachel Ilett (student)

Krystyna Jankowska (student)
Lucy Mc Kulloch (student)
Emma Price (student)
Jaqueline Sands (student)

Volunteers

we had no volunteers during 2020/21

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**ALTON COUNSELLING
SERVICE**

**Accounts for the
year ended**

31 March 2021

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For the financial year ended 31 March 2021

Receipts and Payment Accounts

Note

| (1) Year | Total Funds ^s | |
|--|--------------------------|-----------------|
| | This Year | Last |
| <u>Receipts</u> | | |
| Counselling Sessions and Initial Consultations | 43,315 | |
| 53,920 | | |
| Training Courses | 2,385 | 2,290 |
| Grants and Donations | 7,838 | |
| 12,873 (2) | | |
| Bank Interest | 106 | |
| 129 | | |
| Fund-raising events | 0 | |
| 594 (3) | | |
| Friends of ACS subscriptions | 495 | |
| 655 | | |
| Gift Aid | 0 | |
| 611 | | |
| Sundry income | 0 | |
| 201 | | |
| | <hr/> | |
| | Total Receipts | 54,139 |
| 71,273 | | |
| <hr/> | | |
| <u>Payments</u> | | |
| Counselling and Training | (19,079) | (30,648) |
| Training Courses | 0 | (1,281) |
| Bursary Payments | (6,421) | (4,060) |
| Administration | (30,868) | (21,230) |
| Premises Costs | (3,146) | (7,324) |
| Insurance and Affiliation Fees | (662) | |
| (892) | | |
| Fund-raising events | 0 | (560) |
| | <hr/> | |
| | Total Payments | (60,176) |
| (65,995) | | |
| <hr/> | | |
| Net of Receipts/(Payments) | (6,037) | 5,277 |
| Cash Funds last year end | 25,749 | 20,472 |
| Cash Funds this year end | 19,712 | |
| 25,749 | | |

Statement of Assets and Liabilities at Year End

Unrestricted Funds
£

Charity Commission registered number: 279857

Alton Counselling Service

For the financial year ended 31 March 2021

Cash Funds

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Petty Cash | 24 | |
| Current Account (HSBC bank) | 6,119 | |
| Monies due from Streamline (4) | 255 | |
| Savings Account (Virgin Money) | 16,726 | |
| Total Cash Funds | 23,124 | |
| Deferred income | | (3,412) |
| Total | 19,712 | |

Notes to the accounts

| 1. <u>Restricted Funds (Grants)</u> | Credit | Debit |
|---|--------|-------|
| Balance | £ | £ |
| £ | | |
| 485 Grant from East Hampshire District Council (from 2019/20) | 485 | |
| nil | | |
| Grant from East Hampshire District Council (i) | 6,000 | 2,588 |
| 3,412 | | |
| Hampshire & Isle of Wight Community Foundation (ii) | 5,000 | 5,000 |
| nil | | |

- (i) Grant given towards paying for Counsellors annual Zoom subscriptions to enable counselling sessions to continue over the internet following Covid 19 restrictions on using our office (shown under "Administration" in the accounts) and towards our Bursary scheme (shown under "Bursary Payments" in the accounts) for clients unable to pay the full counselling session fee. Grant to be for 18 months from August 2020 and to be received in 2 tranches of £6,000. As at 31st March 2021 we had used £2,588 of this grant. The second tranche is due in autumn 2021.
- (ii) Grant given towards our Bursary Scheme scheme (shown under "Bursary Payments" in the accounts) for clients unable to pay the full counselling session fee and towards our annual rent (shown under "Premises costs" in the accounts). This grant has been fully utilised.

2. Grants and Donations

During the year, Grants and Donations were received from the following:

| | |
|--------------|-----|
| £ | |
| Alton Masons | 250 |

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East Hampshire District Council

6,000

Hampshire & Isle of Wight Community Foundation

5,000

| | |
|--------------|---------------|
| Total | 11,250 |
|--------------|---------------|

3. Fund-raising events

During the year, receipts from Fund-raising events were as follows:

£0

| | |
|--------------|------------|
| Total | nil |
|--------------|------------|

4. Monies due from Streamline

This figure relates to Client Credit Card payments processed and entered into the Accounts on 29th March 2021 and 31st March 2021. Payments are not normally received into the bank account for 3 to 4 working days. Payments of £45.00 and £210.00 was credited to bank account on 1st April 2021 and Xth April 2021 respectively.

Alton Counselling Service

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Independent Examiner's Report on the Accounts

I report on the accounts of Alton Counselling Service for the year ended 31st March 2021

**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:

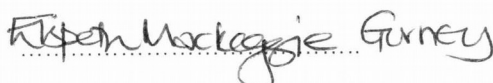
- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

**Basis of independent
examiner's statement**

My examination was carried out in accordance with 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 in the accounts, 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.



Elspeth Mackeggie Gurney
45 Lenten Street
Alton
Hampshire
GU34 1HE

Date: July 19th 2021