

**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

The trustees are pleased to present their annual Trustees' report together with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2024.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the charity's governing document, the Companies Act 2006 and "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)" (as amended for accounting periods commencing 1 January 2016).

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The objective of the Samaritans is to enable persons 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; and To collaborate with and support the Combined Central Charity and its affiliated branches in fulfilling these objects.

Samaritans vision is for a society in which:

- Fewer people die by suicide;

Samaritans mission is to:

- make sure there's someone there for anyone who needs someone.
- give people ways to cope and the skills to be there for others.
- campaign to make suicide prevention a national and local priority.

Samaritans values:

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

- Listening
- Confidentiality
- Non-judgemental
- People making their own decisions
- Human contact

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Incorporation

Coleraine & District Samaritans is a charitable incorporated company governed by its Articles of Association and is a registered charity in Northern Ireland (Charity Registration No. 106792). The charity is a registered affiliate branch of the Samaritans Central United Kingdom and Ireland charity (Registered Charity No. 219432). The charity operated previously as an unincorporated branch of the central charity.

Volunteers

The charity is run by individual Samaritans (also known as volunteers) who are the charity's members. Through its members the charity provides telephone, email, web chat, and face to face support services to individuals (Callers and Visitors) who are experiencing many forms of distress.

Samaritans are recruited from suitable persons from the community who undergo careful selection and training

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within guidelines provided by the Samaritan's Central Charity (which provides guidance and support to all Samaritan branches). Coleraine & District Samaritans have no paid employees; all functions of the branch are carried out by volunteers.

Branch Management

The Trustees, of which the Director is one, have the overall responsibility for the management of the business of the charity, its property and affairs.

The Director is appointed by the Trustees after consultation with the branch members and the Regional Representative.

The Branch Director is responsible for the day-to-day conduct and management of the Branch and for overseeing the work of the Branch. The Director will appoint a team of Functional Leaders/Deputy Directors (who may also be Trustees) to provide support in his/her role.

This Leadership Team, along with the Trustees will meet on a regular basis to monitor the performance of the branch and initiate programmes/actions as necessary.

The Board of Trustees may also meet independently if they so desire.

Appointment of Trustees and Board Members

There must be at minimum of three and a maximum of thirteen Trustees. Following the retirement of the first Trustees, the Board of Trustees will be comprised of as follows;

- The Director
- A Trustee elected by the members with the role of Secretary
- A Trustee elected by members with the role of Treasurer
- Up to a maximum of eight additional Trustees elected by members.
- Up to two further co-opted Trustees who may be appointed by the Board of Trustees.

For the list of current Trustees of the charity, refer to the Legal and Administrative details page.

Central Office Support

Samaritans Central Office provides support to the branches, the regional officers and the volunteer leadership on a range of issues from caller care, telecommunications, statistics, publicity and fundraising, to legal and financial. It is also responsible for a number of co-ordinating functions such as the development and maintenance of Samaritans national telephone number in the UK, Samaritans website, research, development and evaluation, the annual conference and governance. It also offers training in effective communications skills to external organisations.

Finance & Infrastructure Support

Branch finances are reviewed at each Leadership/ Trustee meeting. The Central Office continues to serve as a central source of administrative advice and support to the branches, dealing with financial, IT, and governance matters as well as questions on charity law.

Induction and Training of Trustees

Trustees undertake an online training course relevant to their role and responsibilities and are awarded a certificate on successful completion. In addition to this more detailed training and written guidance are available.

Risk Management

The Branch Trustees acknowledge their responsibility to assess and manage the risks that the Branch faces and to review them at least annually.

The Branch operates a comprehensive annual planning and budgeting process, which is approved by the Leadership Team and Trustees. There is a system of financial reporting that compares actual results against budget to enable corrective action to be taken as and when appropriate.

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Team and Trustees. There is a system of financial reporting that compares actual results against budget to enable corrective action to be taken as and when appropriate.

Structure, Governance & Management of the National Organisation

Samaritans nationally is a charitable company limited by guarantee. It was incorporated as a company on 11 April, 1963, having been founded by the Late Prebendary Dr Chad Varah CH CBE MA on 2 November, 1953.

In addition to the charitable company, the organisation as a whole includes 201 Samaritans branches operating in the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. Branches are unincorporated charitable trusts, each of which is a separate charitable organisation.

Through branch volunteers Samaritans provides confidential emotional support 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Governance Arrangements

Samaritans nationally is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association, adopted at an EGM on 28 January, 2006. Minor amendments to the Articles were made in July 2007, January 2009 and July 2011. The governing body is the Board of Trustees, who are also Directors of the Company. Two-thirds of the Trustees must be Samaritans volunteers.

The Board is advised by the Council of Samaritans. Membership of the Council of Samaritans comprises a representative from each Samaritans branch, a Regional (Non-Executive) Director from each of the 13 operational regions and the Chair. The Regional Directors are the eyes and ears of the Board of Trustees in the wider organisation and play a vital role in supporting branches and ensuring the implementation of Samaritans' policies.

The Chair of the Council is also the Chair of the Board of Trustees and is elected by the Council. The Board meets at least six times a year. The Council meets twice a year, to advise and guide the Board of Trustees on key policy issues and to act as a channel of communication between the Board and branches. The Board reports to Council annually on its activities and provides an update and review of the Company's strategic plan.

An Audit and Risk Committee operates as a formal advisory committee to the Board and has two main roles:

- To satisfy the Board that external and internal audit systems are in place and operating effectively
- To satisfy the Board that there is a robust and effective risk management strategy for the organisation

The committee meets at least three times a year. The committee chair attends Council meetings and reports to members.

Although the Trustees are responsible for directing the affairs of the charity, the size of the organisation means that much of the operational activity is delegated to appropriate committees, working groups, volunteers and, through the Chief Executive, to staff. However, significant matters are specifically reserved for the Board's decision and cannot be delegated. These include the strategic direction of the charity, the approval of key policies (following consultation with the Council of Samaritans), the approval of operational plans and budgets, operational expansion into new activities or geographical areas and any other matter having a material impact on Samaritans' financial position, strategy, reputation or risk profile.

Subject to the above, the Chief Executive and delegated staff are able to approve routine contracts, authorise expenditure and recruit staff in a manner consistent with the organisation's strategic direction and in line with annual budgets previously approved by the Board.

Governance Review

In 2010/11 the Board of Trustees initiated a review of the prevailing governance arrangements. In addition to

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assessing the general effectiveness of governance structures, the review focused on the role of nations and regions. As a result of the review a number of changes to the governance arrangements were made in 2011/12. These included:

- Establishment of a Nominations Committee which is accountable to the Council of Samaritans and which is a formal advisory Committee of the Board of Trustees. This committee is responsible for identifying, reviewing, proposing and ratifying candidates for key governance and leading volunteer roles.
- Plans to set up a Quality and Compliance Committee.
- Creating National Boards in Scotland (Samaritans in Scotland) and Wales (Samaritans Cymru Board). These Boards have a clearly defined leadership role supporting staff and volunteers to deliver Samaritans strategy as well representing Samaritans in their nation.

Appointment of Trustees and Members of Committees

The Chair of the Board of Trustees, who is also the Chair of the Council of Samaritans, is elected by members of the Council. The other members of the Board of Trustees are appointed by the Nominations Committee which comprises the Chair, three Trustees appointed by the Board of Trustees and three Samaritans elected by Council.

Trustees serve an initial term of three years and a maximum of six years in aggregate. The Chair serves up to eight years where s/he has already served as a Trustee prior to his/her appointment as Chair.

With regard to the Audit and Risk Committee, the Board of Trustees appoints two of its members and three are elected by the Council of Samaritans. The Honorary Treasurer is an ex-officio member of the committee with a further member as an external expert appointed by the Board.

Induction and Training of Trustees

Following appointment, each Trustee undertakes a formal induction programme. The programme is more extensive for those Trustees who are not currently Samaritans volunteers and includes a guide to the Vision, Mission and Values of the organisation, the Charity's governing document and the way the central charity links in with the 201 autonomous branches. New Trustees are encouraged to attend regional and branch meetings to increase their understanding of the organisation and current issues. Arrangements are also made for Trustees to visit the charity's Central Office to better understand the services it provides and to meet staff. Briefing papers are given to Trustees on key issues of concern to the organisation. Training is given to Trustees on their formal legal responsibilities. Trustees are made aware of other sources of information, guidance and best practice to be effective in their role.

Risk management

Trustees acknowledge their responsibility to assess and manage risks that the organisation faces and to review them at least annually. However, such systems can only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance against errors, fraud, operational failures and the impact of external events. The charity operates a comprehensive annual planning and budgeting process approved by the Board of Trustees. There is a system of financial reporting to the Board that compares actual results against budget to enable corrective action to be taken as appropriate. The charity has also developed non-financial key performance indicators to provide a more extensive assessment of its effectiveness in meeting its aims.

One of the responsibilities of the Audit and Risk Committee is to review the organisation's risk management strategy and action plan. It reviews risk management at each of its meetings and once a year focuses attention specifically on assessing major risks faced by the organisation and reviewing mitigating actions.

Samaritans Group - The Samaritan Enterprises Ltd

The Company owns 100% of the shares in The Samaritan Enterprises Ltd. The object of the company is to trade as a general commercial company to procure surplus income for the ultimate benefit of the Charity.

Samaritans Ireland

Samaritans Ireland is an Irish company incorporated under the Companies Act 1963 to 2006 on 07 December 2007.

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It is a company limited by guarantee and does not have share capital. It is governed by a Memorandum and Articles of Association which were created during the incorporation. Due to the high degree of influence that Samaritans exercises over the board and activities of Samaritans Ireland, the company's finances are consolidated in line with all applicable standards.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The attached accounts (pages 13 to 21) cover the Coleraine & District Samaritans Branch for the year ended 31st March 2025.

For the Independent Examiner's Report, please refer to page 12.

Results

The Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31st March 2025 shows an operating deficit of £2,700 (2024 – operating surplus of £398).

Principal Funding Sources and Analysis of Expenditure

Income resources in total were £25,067 (2024 - £34,950).

Resources expended on Charitable Activities in the period £27,767 (2024 - £34,552).

Reserves

The reserves of the Charity are included at note 10, in the notes to the Financial Statements.

Investment Policy and Performance

The Charity maintains deposit accounts and reviews the appropriateness of the interest rates to ensure maximisation of the interest received from these investments and adhering to the low risk strategy adopted in this area of the Branch finances.

Interest received during the year was £2,540 (2024 - £354).

Balance Sheet and Cash Flow

The Charity's balance sheet can be reviewed on page 14, and shows net assets at 31st March 2025 of £153,030 (2024 - £155,730).

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Coleraine and District Samaritans has now been in existence for the past 54 years.

Our Branch has maintained a good level of enthusiasm and commitment. We continue to provide an important service for our callers through our telephone and email service. Halfway through the year we lost the email service. Unfortunately, we are not recruiting new volunteers in sufficient quantity to replace those who leave. The decreasing number of volunteers is impacting on our shifts. The Branch suffers from several unwanted shift closures a week, and no shifts through the night hours, when our callers have an excessive delay for their call to be answered by Samaritans. This situation is causing concern and occupies the mind of the Branch Leadership Team and Trustees as we seek solutions.

During the year we resolved historic broadband issues with a new cable and supplier, our connection is now much more stable and reliable. Investigations revealed that Broadband issues affected several premises on Lodge Road. Samaritans have also rolled out a new Listening Centre project, this manages the technical interface with our callers. The change has also introduced new equipment which has helped ease communication frustrations for our callers and volunteers.

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Our premises continue to be in a good standard of repair, all statutory inspections have been conducted in accordance with Health and Safety regulations. Necessary repairs have been conducted as have obligatory inspections to our electric system and central heating system. Legal returns to Samaritan and statutory bodies have been submitted and no issues identified.

Security issues identified by volunteers is being addressed. Qualified contractors have inspected the building and submitted detailed estimates. This includes replacement electronic locks for all doors. An improved intercom system to communicate with Branch visitors and a CCTV system with a monitor to cover the front yard and entrance to the building is being considered.

Branch housekeeping duties are conducted in an efficient manner. Our branch is kept warm and clean with the volunteers availing of unlimited tea coffee and biscuits.

A branch survey identified several topics which concerns our volunteers. The concerns have been considered with a plan of action proposed to help mitigate the concerns of our volunteers. Volunteer Support continue to maintain contact with our volunteers on a regular basis and communicate concerns directly to leadership.

Sound issues within the duty room have been a long running issue compounded recently with the closure of the rear room in accordance with regional management instructions. The changes have added urgency to getting a resolution. A contractor inspected the duty room and identified some solutions, including a possible suspended ceiling, wall furniture to soak up sound, and improvements to booth dividers. Short term measures such as changes to desk positions have been implemented as enquiries continue to identify sustainable solutions.

Legal requirements in relation to vetting of all our volunteers in accordance with Samaritan Regulations has been completed during the year. This year saw Central Office direct all branches to re-check their volunteers' clearances, so they now hold clearances in accordance with current legislation.

Our Branch has conducted numerous outreach activities with various organisations within our area including groups associated with assisting the public with mental health issues. This includes religious organisations, Ulster University, schools, Rotary Clubs, and the retired. We held a very successful "Brew Monday" event at the local railway station. Our aim is to increase Samaritan engagement with the marginalised, vulnerable and disadvantaged members of our community in accordance with Central Office directives.

As a Branch we have enjoyed several Volunteer events during the year, including coffee mornings, talks from Women's Aid, visits from the Mayor, and Samaritans Festival Branch. Volunteers have requested more community-based speakers visit the branch which will be implemented.

Our Branch finances have maintained a healthy status throughout the year. We, as a Branch, meet stringent Samaritan and Government regulations. The finances have been professionally inspected and deemed fit for purpose; all financial duties have been completed in an efficient manner by our Treasurer.

We received assistance from local schools during our Christmas vigil, a partnership with Limavady Rotary and not forgetting our friend, Ballymoney Black Santa, to name three fundraising initiatives. We are immensely proud of the fantastic support from our local community. Money raised has helped to continue the work of reducing suicide within our community. Other welcomed sources of income include, donations from volunteer families, community organisations, churches, bequeathed benefactors and not forgetting friends of Coleraine Samaritans.

Branch Training and Recruitment programmes have been completed throughout the year, thankfully some improvement has been noted from last year. We completed Mandatory Training programmes and implemented extra training during our Branch away day in the Lodge Hotel. A request from our Branch Survey for training on

mental health is being explored. Central Office has requested we implement an ongoing “peer mentoring” programme within our Branch, this sits with our Training Branch for completion.

The Listening scheme at Magilligan Prison and our relationship with the Prison has continued positively throughout the year. Our listeners have been utilised by the prison and work is underway to explore new ways to reduce instances of mental health within the prison using Samaritan Listeners. The scheme has been enhanced with a recruitment and training programme which saw the number of listeners significantly rise. We attend meetings with prison management on a monthly basis.

Our Branch Trustees remain active and participate in their legal requirements.

TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES IN RELATION TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The charity trustees (who are also directors for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing a trustees' annual report and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the charity trustees to prepare financial statements for each year which give a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources for that period. In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- State whether applicable UK accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation in the UK governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

BASIS OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the charity's governing document, the Companies Act 2006 and “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)” (as amended for accounting periods commencing 1 January 2016).

RISK MANAGEMENT

The Trustees acknowledge their responsibility to assess and manage the risks that the charity faces and to review them annually. However, such systems can only provide reasonable not absolute assurance against errors, fraud and operational failures.

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The charity operates an annual planning and budgeting process, which is approved by the Trustees. There is a system of financial reporting to the Trustees that compares actual results against budget to enable corrective action to be taken as and when appropriate. The Trustees are responsible for ensuring that the charity has a sound system of internal financial control, to safeguard its assets and funds, and to give assurance that its policies are implemented and its aims and objectives are met. For reasons of cost and practicality, the system of internal financial control is intended to manage rather than eliminate risks and to give reasonable assurance rather than absolute assurance.

Trustees are required to identify and analyse risks relevant to their responsibilities, assess them according to potential impact on the charity and their likelihood of occurrence and report on procedures which are in place, or to be put in place, to manage the risks. Trustees have undertaken a Risk Assessment programme which examined the major risks which the Charity faces and sets out a Risk Management system which details the steps to be taken so as to lessen the identified risks. The Trustees exercise their responsibilities through the Leadership Team/ Trustee meetings.

Statement as to disclosure to our independent examiners

In so far as the trustees are aware at the time of approving our trustees' annual report:

- There is no relevant information, being information needed by the independent examiner in connection with preparing their report, of which the independent examiner is unaware; and
- The trustees, having made enquiries of fellow directors that they ought to have individually taken, have each taken all steps that they are obliged to take as a director in order to make themselves aware of any relevant accounting information and to establish that the independent examiner is aware of that information.

By order of the board of trustees

This report was approved by the Trustees on 09 September 2025 and is signed on their behalf by;



**Mr K Bleakley
Director**



**Mrs MB McMahon
Treasurer**

