

Southampton & District

SAMARITANS 2011 Annual Review



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Committee

Steve Rawlins - Committee Chair
 Nicola Tyson - Vice Chair
 Steve Davis - Treasurer
 Maureen Baker - Secretary
 Roy Stoneham
 Anne McLeod
 Richard Kennett
 Jo Saunders

Directorate

John McNeil - Director
 Martine - Leaders & Mentors
 Katy - Caller Care
 Diane - Administration
 David - Outreach
 Bogusia - Volunteer Care
 Dorothy - Recruitment & Selection
 Clare - Training

Independent Examiner – Heather Leaming

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Chair's Review 2011

The Branch Committee exists to ensure that the infrastructure is in place to maintain a secure, safe and comfortable working environment for all our volunteers and visitors. We also promote the services our branch offers, as well as raising and managing all the finances required each year.

This has been my last year in office and I have had the chance to reflect on the last 3 years which have seen many changes and challenges along the way. This year has seen the branch's presence on the web significantly increase with our updated website, a new Facebook page and a fundraising page on the Virgin Money Giving site. All of these will make it easier to communicate with callers and supporters. In addition we have purchased and installed a new SMS (text) computer.

However, this year's biggest challenge has been the loss of our permanent tenants whose income goes a long way to support the work we do. With the help of a number of volunteers we have now secured new tenants, thus ensuring the continuation of this valuable revenue stream for us. We have also made efficiency savings of around 10% whilst undertaking a number of other fundraising activities to bring additional monies in, including car boot sales, pavement collections and a quiz night. Securing revenue continues to be challenging and we strive to find new and creative ways of fundraising. Given this, at present, the finances are in a stable position and we have continued to maintain contingency funds to ensure the continued provision of the service.

I would very much like to say how grateful we are to the many individuals and organisations that have helped us with financial and other support over the year. Also to the many volunteers who have stood in all weathers to hold a collection tin with no complaints! In addition, my thanks also go to all my Committee members who have given their support to me and the Branch during my time as Chair.

I will end now by saying that the Branch Committee is very much committed to the task of supporting volunteers at Southampton Samaritans in the vital role they carry out.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Southampton Communities Team for the grant to purchase folding tables for our conference room. We would also like to thank our supporters and volunteers for all their hard work over the last year. Running our branch costs just under £40,000 a year and we rely solely on donations to fund our work.

If you feel able to support us with a donation or know of anyone who would be able to offer support in any of our volunteer roles we would very much like to hear from you.

Steve 1297

A Bit More About Us

What We Do

Southampton Samaritans have been operating in the heart of Southampton for nearly 50 years. Based in a central location we offer confidential non-judgemental emotional support for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those which could lead to suicide.

We provide a 24/7 service for callers on the telephone, in person, via email and SMS (text). We offer callers the space to explore their feelings, including feelings of self-harm and suicide. We are here for all, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, disability or ethnic background.

We believe that being listened to in confidence, without fear of being judged, can be a huge relief and is often the first step in finding a way to cope. As such, in the past year we have taken 19,117 calls, seen 470 people face to face, written 710 emails and started answering SMS texts.

Our Team

We have a team of 129 listening and support volunteers helping us to provide the service. Our volunteers are from all sorts of backgrounds and have a wide range of life experience. Around 70% are female and about 30% of all volunteers are over 60.

Our volunteers don't offer advice, because what works for one person might not work for everyone. But we believe that given the time and space to work through problems or difficulties in confidence, everyone can find an inner strength that lets them find their own way forward.

Recruitment and Selection

We need new volunteers to continue to help us provide our service and, as such, we hold an information evening each month for potential new volunteers. This is a 3 hour introduction to the work we do, so that people can understand more fully what it takes to be a volunteer and if it's something they would like to get involved in.

For those who are interested, we then hold further selection evenings, where the information gathering is two way, followed by interviews for those who wish to go on to join our team.

During the past year a total of total 125 people have attended our information events and 64 of these have gone on to attend a selection event.

Attendance at each information event has ranged from between 6 and 20 during this year.



Fundraising

Providing confidential, emotional support costs us just under £40,000 each year. We receive no allotted funding directly, therefore we raise all our own funds through a number of fundraising activities, in addition to renting out the front of our building to a local education establishment.

We hold a number of pavement collections around the city and the volunteers organise various other activities such as Quiz Nights, Open Houses and Car Boot Sales. All the activities also allow us the opportunity to inform the public more about the service we offer.



Training

Once new volunteers have been selected, we run 3 new training courses each year. Each course consists of 6, 3 hour sessions and 2 whole day events over 2 months. The training team then ensure each new volunteer is moved into mentoring with an experienced volunteer so that they can become a fully-fledged member of the team. The team has continued to put a tremendous amount of time and effort into all aspects of training over the year. This year we have trained 35 new volunteers and we have finished this year out by training our 2000th volunteer (since our inception in 1963).

Volunteer Care

We would not be able to do our work without our volunteers, therefore we need to ensure we look after them. We have a support structure in place so that none of our volunteers should feel that they are on their own with the emotional impact of the distress and despair people who need our support share with us. We have day leaders to talk to on daily basis and also support groups that meet, on average, every two months to discuss branch and national issues, raise volunteers' concerns and share best practice.

Outreach and Publicity

Our Outreach and Publicity volunteers work hard every year to promote the service we offer to as wide an audience as possible. This year we have been working in some local schools and colleges, linking up with the local student Nightline help line, as well as joining up with the national initiative with Network Rail to reduce the 200 suicides on the railways by 20% by 2015. Southampton Central Station has been one of the stations targeted in the campaign.



Director's Review – It's All Change After 3 Years!!

I can't believe that it is 3 years since I took over the reins from Sue and it is now my turn to hand over to our new Director, Ann. I would like to wish Ann and her new Directorate Team all the very best in their new roles.

I could not have done this role on my own and I would like to give a very big public thank you to my dedicated team of Deputy Directors. My thanks go to Martine, Katy, Clare, David, Bogusia, Dorothy and Diane for their help and support over the last three years.

I would also like to thank the volunteers working with the DDs for their contribution to the provision of our service and the promotion of our branch, as well as the Day Leaders who oversee the daily running of the service and to the Group Leaders for the support they offer to our volunteers. In addition, I would like to thank the Committee, led by our Chair Steve, for their dedication in keeping the branch up and running.

Some new initiatives that we brought in this year have been the introduction of the SMS (text) service for callers. This service has proven to be especially popular with younger callers who traditionally have not phoned or visited Samaritans in great numbers. Another initiative is our partnership with Network Rail to reduce the number of suicides on the railway network. We have initiated talks with Southampton Railway Station and this work will continue into next year.

Of course we could not provide any service to callers if it were not for the dedication of our volunteers and I would like to thank all of them personally for the time and support that they give week on week, whether as a listening volunteer, a support volunteer, a leader or trustee.

So, as I take my final bow as Director of Southampton & District Samaritans I would like to say a very big thank you to everyone associated with such a great branch. Thank you doesn't always seem enough to say for all the support I have received over these last three years and for all that the position of Director has given to me, but I hope you will know how heartfelt and true that thank you is.



I know I am handing over a strong dedicated branch into the capable hands of Ann and her team and I know that the branch will give them their support in moving us forward into the future and to provide the best service we can to our callers for whom we are ultimately here.

Many thanks, John 1284

Treasurers Review – Challenging Times

We have had a difficult financial year, mainly caused by the drastic drop in our income due to the combination of challenging economic times and the loss of our tenants in December. The rent we received from them accounted for 60% of our income. The past 4 years have seen our income drop by around 50%, with our costs remaining about the same (although some belt tightening has taken place!) However, this year saw slight increase in spend with the need to purchase a new boiler for the building at around £4,000. In 2007 we generated £63,000, in 2010 it was £36,000 and this year less it has been than £26,000. The result of this is an operating loss of £9,238 this year, which we have covered with our contingency fund.



Fortunately we have found new tenants and, subject to the lease being finalised, this will bring our income back to a healthy level. Looking forward, hopefully we can get back on an even keel and work hard to increase our income and at the same time control costs as best we can.

Statement of the Financial Activities Year As at 30th September 2011

	2011	2010
Incoming Resources		
Donations and Grants	£7803	£6,941
Activities for Generating Funds	£4311	£6,885
Investment Income	£250	£754
Other Incoming Resources	£13,245	£21,235
Total Incoming Resources	£25,609	£35,815
Resources Expended		
Cost of Generating Funds	£478	£105
Charitable Expenditure	£27,152	£22,041
Management & Administration	£7,217	£5,718
Total Expenditure	£34,847	£27,864
Net Movement This Year	-£9,238	£7,951