



# Welcome

Thank you for taking an interest in Eastbourne and District Samaritans and thank you to all supporters and friends of the Branch. We are an entirely self-funded incorporated charity which is affiliated to the national Samaritans charity. We are run

and led by volunteers from the Eastbourne area and operate without any financial help from the central Samaritans charity. We are here at The Haven thanks to the generosity of our donors and the effectiveness of our shop on Grove Road.

The Samaritans' service is in big demand nationally and more is being asked of us. While Eastbourne is one of the more prosperous areas of the UK, many in our area have been affected by the pressures on the cost of living and this cost squeeze is affecting both our callers and our volunteers. We are living in an unstable world and we are still emerging from the pandemic which is having a significant and possibly delayed impact on the country's mental health.

In February 2023 we produced a long-term strategy for the Branch 2023-2027 and our mission is:

To improve our capability to offer emotional support to callers nationally and to the community of Eastbourne and District including visitors to the coast and Beachy Head.

The strategy has five key priorities around: increasing the number of **listening volunteers**; extending our **outreach activities**; improving our **capacity** to respond to our callers by regular ongoing training and mentoring; ensuring the **sustainability** of our Branch, and increase our **influence** locally to improve awareness of Samaritans' service.

Our service is very simple. We are not professionals and we are trained to listen with empathy in a non-judgemental way according to the 5 core values of the Samaritans.





#### **LISTENING**

Exploring feelings alleviates distress and helps 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

People have the right to find their own solution and telling people what to do takes responsibility away.



### HUMAN CONTACT

Giving people time, undivided attention and empathy meets a fundamental emotional need.



#### The Haven

- Our Branch reopened for face-to-face callers in July 2022 and for a while we were one of only three Samaritan branches open in the country. This has been a major success for the Branch and has been very welcomed by the community in Eastbourne. We receive up to 20 face-to-face callers per month, all of whom greatly appreciate our support.
- We introduced the Webchat facility to the Branch in July 2022 which is an instant online interactive messaging service for those who prefer not to talk and is enabling the Samaritans to reach out to new and younger callers.



### **Branch Leadership Team**

Vice Director: Michelle 1156

Trustees: Belinda 1229 (Secretary) Nick 1004 (Treasurer from 2023/4) Steve 1148 (Treasurer to 2022/3) Nicky 1112 Chris 1221 Penny 1217

Deputy Directors: Fenella 1199 Recruitment; Gill 1025

Training; Helen 1197 Mentoring/Embedding; Sue 1177

Leaders; Mia 1094 Outreach.

Others: Kevin 1129 Prison Coordinator; Caroline 1106 Fundraising/Friends; Dick 981 Building; Jeff 1151 Branch Hub Liaison; Nicky 1112 Volunteer Care; Jane 1211 Rota; Jane 1198/Tolu SV Website; Derek 1096/Timothy 1135 IT. Plus support volunteers keeping us neat and tidy



## Eastbourne Branch At a glance in 2022/3

(% change 2021/2)

Listening Volunteers	83.7	(+2.4%)
Support Volunteers	19.0	(-)
Calls Taken	21,140	(+10.0%)
Hours on the Phone	6,011	(+2.8%)
Emails Answered	984	(-47.0%)
Webchats	188	(-)
Face to Face Callers	145	(-)
Annual Expenditure	£43,678	(+2.8%)

- We managed to increase the number of calls taken compared to the two previous years. We answered 10.0% more calls than last year and 13.3% more than the pre-COVID year of 2019/20. We answered fewer emails but this reflects the change in Samaritan policy to direct more emails through a new central Email Hub. We can be proud of the 6,011 hours that our volunteers spent on the phones last year - which is a new record for the Branch. Our main priority for the year ahead is to increase the number of volunteers in the Branch and provide a quality service to our callers. The more calls that we can answer, the more we are meeting the growing demand for our service. Secondly, we are here to serve, where we can, the emotional needs of the Eastbourne and District community. The Branch is well recognised and respected in Eastbourne and there is a strong desire to expand the well-established outreach activities beyond what we already do for Lewes Prison, Network Rail, schools and colleges in the area and other community groups.
- If you would like to find out more about us, become a volunteer or a Friend of Eastbourne Samaritans please get in touch with us. We would love to hear from you. All contact details are on the back page.

David 1162 Branch Director

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fter two years of not being able to engage in our usual Outreach activities we are pleased to be involved with the Eastbourne community again, supporting those who need us but do not necessarily know who we are and what we do.

We re-started our visits to the Rebourne Centre (Salvation Army) and attended the East Sussex local Suicide Prevention meetings where we discuss and plan local suicide prevention, communicate with other organisations and authorities to help reduce deaths by suicide in the County.

In January, we ran part of National Childbirth Trust (NCT) training session for volunteers to help them to respond to difficult conversations for both expectant mothers and post birth. This gives a perfect opportunity to share our listening skills with others and help others dealing with difficult conversations to feel more confident.

• We also took part in the national campaign Small Talk Saves Lives, letting people know that even a simple "Where can I get coffee" can start a conversation. This campaign has run in partnership with Network Rail and British Transport Police since 2017 and its aim is to help commuters



start a conversation if they are worried about someone.

- We also attend The Big Futures Show every year to raise awareness to young students about what we do and to break some myths about Samaritans, including not having to feel suicidal in order to contact us.
- Our aim in the community is to let people know that if they have something on their mind in the evening and it's still there in the morning, then perhaps they need to talk to someone. If the issue is sensitive or they don't have anyone to talk to, Samaritans can be there to listen without judgment or telling people what to do. ■

Mia 1094 Outreach

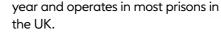
# Samaritans and the Prison Listener Scheme

ates of suicide and self-harm in UK prisons are many times greater than in the community, and over half of the prison population suffers from poor mental health. Samaritan branches in the South East of England cover all the prisons in the region.

- At HMP Lewes, we have a very effective partnership with Brighton and Horsham Samaritan branches. Our volunteers train selected prisoners to become Listeners for prisoners who are at risk. We then provide weekly support to the Listeners both as individuals and as a group. We also train prison officers, and work with the prison management to train Safety Officers, who then act as ambassadors for the Listener scheme. Following a death in custody, members of our team attend the prison to offer support to both prisoners and staff.
- Resources throughout the prison service have been stretched to the limit. Our work makes an important contribution to rehabilitation by providing the Listeners with essential additional skills for life, and helps to reduce reoffending. Our support to HMP Lewes is a key part of our Branch activities and we are very proud of the outcomes we have achieved.

## What is the Listener Scheme?

The Listener Scheme is a support service, provided by prisoners for prisoners, which aims to reduce the incidence of suicide and self-harm in prisons. The scheme is now in its 32nd



Samaritan volunteers train prisoners at HMP Lewes to become Listeners. Once trained, Listeners are called upon by other prisoners who are at risk of suicide or self-harm. The Samaritan volunteers support the Listeners individually and as a group.

#### Why are we involved?

The Institute of Psychiatry estimates that over half of prisoners suffer poor mental health, including depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and anxiety. Suicide among prisoners is up to 15 times more common than in the community. In the 12 months to March 2023, there were 322

deaths in prison custody, a rate of nearly 4 per 1,000 prisoners. This is an increase of 12% in the previous 12 months. Very high rates of self-harm remain at about 700 incidents per 1000 prisoners, especially among prisoners on remand.



Eastbourne, Brighton and Horsham branches have provided training to nearly 50 officers at HMP Lewes, and have supported both prisoners and staff following recent deaths in custody. We have expanded our Branch team and have trained over 20 new Listeners during the last year. We regularly contribute to the prison's security and safer custody management team.

For more on the Listener scheme: www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/prisons/listener-scheme

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# The Volunteer

# Experience

## What's it like to be a volunteer in a prison?



Entering a prison for the first time can be a bit daunting, but that feeling soon fades. Currently, the prison service is experiencing multiple challenges, but working with our Listeners is one of the most rewarding things I've ever done. They support many vulnerable individuals. and have undoubtedly saved many lives. It's a real privilege to play a part in that.

**Kevin 1129 Prison Team Coordinator** 

Becoming a Samaritan was something very personal as I had experienced suicide within my family. I wasn't sure if I would be a suitable volunteer because I was usually the one talking. The training delivered by Kevin and Gill was a most transformative experience. It was fun and engaging and I always felt so safe. I am from the Czech Republic and our culture is less open about talking about personal problems - it's the 'no-one's business attitude' and I wanted someone to listen to me.

I was not worried about this with the Samaritans because the quality of training guided me through how to become a good active listener. The emotional support my fellow Samaritan volunteers gave made me feel at home. After a year, I became a mentor and a part of the prison team at HMP Lewes. I love both

of these additional roles because they keep me up-to-date with the organisation's development, and I learn more about what we do.

All the skills that I have learned and continue to learn are integrated into my everyday life, and this is very positive in my interaction with others. All callers and volunteers have significantly impacted my professional and personal growth. I feel privileged to be part of the Samaritan



When I joined the Samaritans just under a year ago I was immediately impressed with the warm and professional training offered by Gill, Kevin and other team members. The ongoing mentoring has also been immensely helpful and other Listeners are always on hand to offer support and advice - and a cup of tea!

It has been a pleasure too to be involved in fundraising events such as the Christmas carol service in the Beacon and the recent Sunshine Carnival. I really

appreciate my role as a volunteer and I look forward to many more years of service.



**Helen 1243** 



- come to one of our Information Evenings.
- Information Evenings which are held 6-8 times a year give an opportunity to find out more about what we do and what is involved in becoming a listening volunteer. All dates are on our website.
- You will be given high quality training to prepare you in becoming a Samaritan Listener. After training you will be assigned a mentor for at least 24 hours of mentoring and then you will meet monthly with your training group in embedding sessions to reflect as a group on your experience.

a good way of dealing with anything that you find difficult. You will be supported by your fellow volunteer,

our leaders and the volunteer care team.



Volunteer with us. Email: Fenella 1199

Eastbourne.branchrecruitment@samaritans.org

# The Volunteer Experience

I was always interested in joining the Samaritans, and last year it felt like the right time. I attended the information evening and felt so welcome. The training I received was really impressive and I felt so supported. I couldn't wait to start.

Going into the duty room that first shift, I felt a real mix of emotion: daunting; exciting and completely terrifying. The volunteer that I was on with made me feel so at ease that I couldn't wait for my next shift. I really enjoy being a Listener and feel privileged that someone shared

their thoughts with me. It's a real

There is always someone to speak to for support and I have made some life-long friends. The Haven is a wonderful place.



When I decided to become a Samaritan I knew I was looking for something real, a connection, perhaps just something genuinely good in the world. I'm so pleased to say that by becoming a Samaritan volunteer I've found exactly what I was looking for. Initially I was terrified I'd fall short of what it takes to be a Samaritan, not least because I was in the midst of a cancer battle and I used to have what could only be described as a phobia about taking or making phone calls!

I needn't have worried. The training I received and the connections I built with my fellow Samaritans not only helped me be the Listener I am today but also provided me with the community I needed to recover from my chemoradiotherapy, leading to

the glad news that I am, so far, cancer free. The solidarity and companionship of the Samaritans is so profound, there's nothing else a continual honour to perform my



**Russ 1241** 

I've ever experienced like it and it is listening duties every week.

To be there for people in distress we need to be there for each other. From the start I was impressed by the ways Listeners are supported. I never felt I was on my own, and it was always possible to talk things over. It feels healthy that off-loading about calls is part of any shift, and that there is additional back-up when needed. Even as a relatively new Listener I was encouraged to become a shift Leader. It has been an opportunity to learn from colleagues many different ways of listening well. The mutuality of support creates a community. And it's a community with free biscuits!

George 1244 Volunteer with us. Email: Fenella 1199 Eastbourne.branchrecruitment@samaritans.org



# Ongoing Training and Mentoring

n the past year as we eased out of COVID, we have had some ongoing training and talks that have helped understand the context of what we do as Samaritans. "Please no more zoom or online training, can we have some real people giving talks". This was a common refrain that Michelle and I heard as we emerged from the COVID restrictions. Samaritans Central office has moved to online training and whilst this is a general trend for all organisations, you cannot replace the human contact.

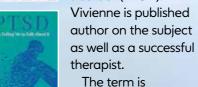


Simon Fanshawe gave us something to think about last AGM in July in terms of what diversity is

all about and why it's important to understand what this really means for Samaritans, and is there really such a thing as unconscious bias? We need to address our biases if we have any, and "please no more box ticking on diversity, celebrate diversity and do not make everyone the same".



We had a fascinating talk by our own **Vivienne 1155** on post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).



The term is used to describe a range of physical

and emotional symptoms that people may experience following a traumatic event. It is now seen as a construct beyond military experiences and major disasters. It is commonly diagnosed in individuals who have survived traumatic events that were life threatening, believed to be life threatening or highly distressing. As Samaritans it helps to understand that PTSD symptoms can appear long after the traumatic event, and that it is never too late to detect and treat PTSD.

Thank you, Vivienne, we are lucky to have you in the family.



Matt Williams (Sams Oxford) provided a very thought provoking presentation on

male versus female suicide ideation and how as volunteers we need to reflect on the different way men and women express their feelings on the phone. "Let men be angry" was his comment, anger is a feeling and provided that they are not rude to the volunteers, this can often enable an eventual transition to a good call which addresses feelings.

Matt co-founded the Oxfordshire Men's Health Partnership in 2021 and chairs the Thames Valley Suicide Prevention and Intervention Network (SPIN).





# **Our Amazing Shop**

he following extracts from our customer comments book indicate what a treasure we have in our shop manager, Jo Stringer.

"To the new manager, just wanted to say what a fantastic job you have done with the shop. You should be proud of yourself."

"Your window could be in Bond Street, it's soooo SPECIAL"

And we Samaritans are proud of Jo and her team. Jo has been with us two years now, and she has transformed the shop. Supported by her staff, the shop raises a considerable amount of money for our Branch – this year the shop contributed £21,205 directly to the Branch which equated to around 40% of its

income for the year. Absolutely brilliant!

Jo continues to make improvements, both in the much-praised window displays, and on the shop floor. The shop counter has been relocated to the middle of the shop where it's easier to keep an eye on things, and nearer to the stairs that lead down to the Aladdin's cave where clothes are waiting to be steamed, and where we keep goods waiting to be valued. The shop will soon have new flooring.

Clockwise from

Raymond: the

van; Amelie; Frances

top left: The shop; Jo and

The two other members of staff, Raymond and Jo's partner, James, have also contributed to the success of the shop. Both are skilled at valuing donated goods and selling them on eBay. Raymond has made a good recovery from a recent illness, and we are happy to have him back on the shop floor. "I cannot speak

more highly of the friendly staff who welcome you."

Just a few words about two of the fifteen shop volunteers, who, as you can see from the extract from the customer comments book above, are valued for their friendliness.

Frances has been a volunteer at the shop for over 15 years. She has fond memories of working with the previous manager Lindy, and her husband, Harry, who, she said,

worked very hard, often in difficult circumstances. Frances particularly enjoys meeting the shoppers and keeping everywhere smart and tidy, or, in her own words, 'elegant'.

Amelie is our newest recruit. She's 13 years' old and taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh scheme. She's bright and she's keen. She's a big fan of charity shops and applied to volunteer at our shop on the

recommendation of her mother who explained what Samaritans is all about. She works in the shop every Saturday morning, so why not call in and say hello.

If you haven't yet visited our shop, you're missing a treat. You

are always welcome. Introduce yourself as a fellow Samaritan, and you're eligible for a discount.

Ronnie SV978, Shop Director

# Shop Opening Times

Mon-Sat 9:30am-4:00pm 01323-626624 31, Grove Road BN214TT

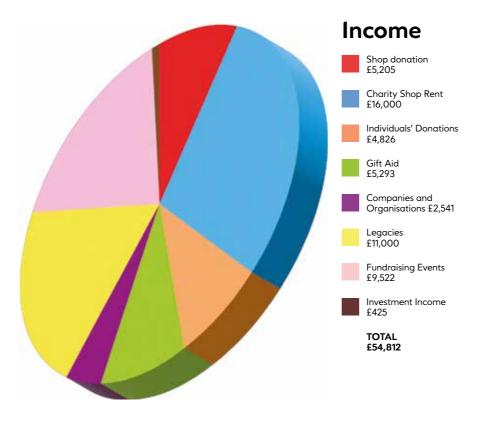
# Finances and Fundraising

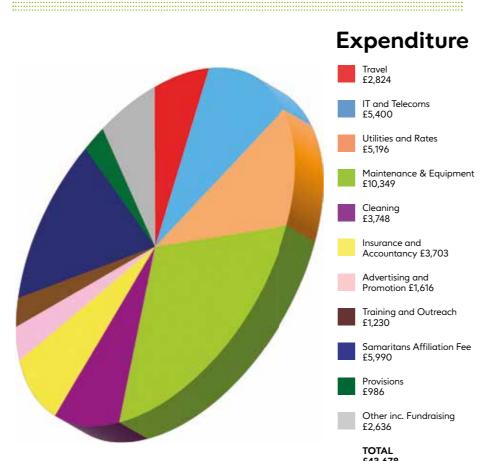
e are entirely dependent on donations, legacies and the income from our shop to run the Branch. We are fortunate in owning both the Haven and the shop on Grove Road. In the last financial year our income was over £11,000 greater than our expenditure of £43,678.

Annually the shop pays the charity £16,000 in rent and, in addition, will this year be able to donate a trading surplus of £5,205, giving a total contribution to the charity of £21,205. This would have been higher but the shop had the additional expense of needing to replace its van.

As always, we are deeply indebted to the shop's staff, directors and volunteers for all their hard work and efforts in achieving this and to all our donors.

We have started a new initiative this year: Friends of Eastbourne Samaritans which is our way of showing our appreciation by giving you an opportunity to find out more about what we do. All members of the Friends will receive newsletters (2-3 per year), invitations to events and an opportunity to meet with some of our volunteers. If you would like to know more about friends contact Caroline 1106: friends@ eastbournesamaritans.org





• The largest event in 2022/23 was the Eastbourne 'Airbourne' Air Show where the public had voted, pre-Covid, for Eastbourne Samaritans to be the show's 'People's Charity'. This raised us just over £3,300.

• We all love the Bluebell Walk in May and the charity is also indebted every year to the McCutchan family of Bates Green Farm, Arlington for allowing us to provide catering and visitor assistance for two days at their annual Bluebell Walk. In May 2022 this raised around £2,350 for the Branch.

• Another regular supporter of Samaritans nationwide is the comedian Sarah Millican. When on tour, she invites local Samaritans' branches to take a retiring collection at the end of her show. Our volunteers attended for one night at the Brighton Dome where a total of £1,370 was raised.

Amongst other fundraising and local events this year were a Quiz Night, the Rodmill Pub's 'Open Mic' evening, Eastbourne Sunshine Carnival, Eastbourne 999 Emergency Services Weekend, carol singing at The Beacon Shopping Centre with the Eastbourne Choral Society, Cargo Gym's 'Santa Workout' at the Saffrons Sports Club, and the sale of our own-design Christmas cards. Altogether around £3,500 was raised by our volunteers through these events.

Donations totalling just over £2,540 were gratefully received from local organisations and funds including Croudace Homes, the Consuelo and Anthony Brookes Trust, Eastbourne Lottery Community Fund, Broadway United Church and Eastbourne Choral Society. ■





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# The Samaritans is 70!



# Ralph Ketry New Pauline Anne Caroline Alison Mim Dick Stema Carole Schema Carole Acarole Alison Mim Dick Stema Carole Alison Mim Dick Stema Mim Dick Stema Carole Alison Mim Dick Stema Carole

## Eastbourne Branch is

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he Rev'd Chad Varah started the Samaritans in November 1953. Throughout his career Chad offered counselling to his parishioners and wanted to do something more specific to help people contemplating suicide. Chad was offered charge of the parish of St Stephen in the City of London, a post which gave him the time he needed to launch what he called a '999 for the suicidal'. In 1957 the Samaritans had the first 24-hour phone helpline in the World.

- Eastbourne Samaritans began in February 1965 in rented rooms in Christ Church, Seaside. We then moved to Terminus Road and subsequently to 25 Susans Road. We have been in Bolton Road since 1992.
- Over the years we are proud of the strong sense of identity that we have at the Branch. We are a grassroots membership organisation and there is a strong feeling of loyalty to our Branch. This is demonstrated by the amazing fact that our 22 longest serving Samaritans together have 500 years of service. Note our 5 longest serving Samaritans collectively have 200 years of experience. Thank you Ralph 277, Kathy 414, Margaret 427, Jill 587 and Ken 630 and the other 17 who make up the 500 club! ■

# Long Service Awards



I have been a member of the Branch for almost 11 years. How that time has flown. What has kept

me volunteering as a Samaritan is the very strong feeling of doing something really worthwhile that comes with the role. It is often a privilege and a humbling experience to listen to a stranger and to help relieve their distress or despair by allowing them to tell of what has happened in their lives without judgement or bias. People often end their call to us by saying how much better they feel and how grateful they are for the Samaritans.

I also lead a skilled team who are passionate about training our new

volunteers. It's both exciting and very rewarding to help people learn the skills needed to listen and to see them grow in confidence throughout our training sessions until they finally take their place in the Duty Room. For some people, including myself, the experience is life-changing, making us better able to support friends and family too.

I have made many friends amongst the people who volunteer with Samaritans. They are 'special' people from all walks of life who provide support, care and love for each other as we carry out our sometimes challenging roles. There is time for fun and laughter too which helps us to keep going and enjoy what we do.

Gill 1025



I'd known about Samaritans for many years before becoming a volunteer as an aunt had

volunteered at a branch in the north of England. I remember thinking what an important service it was offering and logged it in my mind. I felt it would be a good way of giving back something to people who had no one to turn to or talk to. Years later I contacted Eastbourne Samaritans and was invited to start training within a few weeks. All these years later I still answer each call with the same feeling of uncertainty as to what emotional support the caller will be requiring, and no two calls have ever been the same. The need for the Samaritans is as great now as it was 20 years ago and I feel it is a great privilege to be a Samaritan who are able to offer this to so many people at their time of need.

Caroline 844

35 years I have seen some changes over 35 years. Moving to The Haven was, at the time a big risk, but has certainly

given us a fine base from which to carry out Samaritan duties etc.

Rota duties are much more flexible and volunteer-friendly. No more 10:00pm – 7:00am by yourself! Training is now of a higher standard and follows a national structure. My training was just four Sundays and then I started duties.

The Samaritan logo is now well known, we are proud of being "Sams" and we make our presence felt in the local area in numerous ways. In my early days we were discouraged from telling others we were Samaritans!

As for our callers, there are now more men calling and a younger age group, and certainly many sad people with mental health problems. Jill 587

# Thank You

Eastbourne and District would like to say a big thank you to all our volunteers who give their time for others and to the members of the community who have supported us with donations and in other ways.

#### Companies

Croudace Homes
Bates Green Farm
Cargo Gym Ltd
Rodmill Pub
The Candy Shop
Beth's Cakery

Organisations
Consuelo and Anthony Brookes
Trust
Eastbourne Lottery Community
Fund
Eastbourne Sunshine Carnival
Broadway United Church

#### Individuals Susan Epps

**Eastbourne Choral Society** 

Rebecca Honeysett
Jo-Ann McCarthy
Sarah Millican
Richard Penticost
Janet Ratcliffe
Jo & Paul Richards
Suzanne Smith
Jean White

#### Legacies

**Samuel Stringer** 

Donations in memory of Mrs Maureen Farrant

Thanks to
Design
Dave 1254P
www.davidricedesign.com
www.davidriceart.com

#### Printing

Custard Design and Print 01323 430303

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# Whatever you're facing

We're here to listen

116 123

<sub>Email</sub> jo@samaritans.org

Freepost SAMARITANS LETTERS

SAMARITANS

samaritans.org



# The Haven, 13 Bolton Road Eastbourne BN21 3JT

Open for face to face visitors: 10:30am-10:30pm (8:30pm winter) 7 days per week



@EastbourneSams



www.samaritans.org/eastbourne



#### **Contact Details**

**Director:** David 1162/ Michelle 1156 eastbourne.director@samaritans.org

**Branch Secretary:** Belinda 1229 eastbourne@samaritans.org

Treasurer: Nick 1004

treasurer@eastbournesamaritans.org

**Info Evenings:** Fenella 1199

BranchRecruitment@samaritans.org

Outreach: Mia 1094

outreach@eastbournesamaritans.org

**Fundraising/Friends:** Caroline 1106 friends@eastbournesamaritans.org

**Shop:** Jo Stringer

01323 646624. Mon-Sat 9:30am - 4.00pm

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