

Sevenoaks Samaritans Newsletter

July-September 2023

Planning for the future

“We’ve had a great summer at Sevenoaks Samaritans, with some important outreach events and our hugely successful annual fundraising drive,” says service director Kay Turner (pictured above right). “You can see how much fun we had in the pictures throughout this newsletter.



“As we look towards the Autumn, and the end of our third year of volunteering, we’re now focusing on really setting up our service for the longer term.

“We’ll be looking to develop our fundraising and recruitment teams to help us grow steadily and sustainably, and we want to help develop the skills of our listening and support volunteers who may want to do more. It can be very rewarding to take

on one of the many roles offered by our service, and we plan to show new and existing volunteers the possibilities open to them.”



Picture shows outreach volunteers Vicki, Karen, Lizzi and Barbara at Tonbridge Pride in August

Going the distance

We raised a record £6,000+ during our annual fundraising month in July. As a self-funding service we have to raise around £36,000 to keep listening from our Sevenoaks hub and the events we run during July’s Samarathon – the national charity’s drive to do a marathon in a month – are vital to our fundraising strategy.

This year we asked our dogs to do the walking in our Mooch with a Pooch event. Our four-legged friends bounded up to the challenge in a mass mooch on Kensing Recreation Ground (pictured below), and covered hundreds of miles for us.



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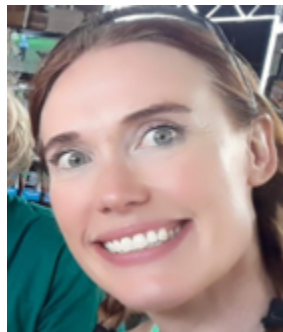
Special mention to Golden Retriever Star (*pictured above, centre*), who walked more than 260 miles during the month, with owner and listening volunteer Victoria Kennedy racking up some eight miles a day alongside her. A big thank you to all the dogs and owners who took part.

We also raised money through straightforward striding on two legs and by baking 26 different cakes, breads and bakes (ranging from Argentine Bread, through Viennese Biscuits, to Welsh cakes) – all eaten during listening shifts. The recipes were collated by organiser Jill Egelton into a PDF which we also sold.

Developing the team

We've created two new lead roles as we develop our volunteering team at Sevenoaks Samaritans.

Vicki Rushton (*pictured right*) has taken the role as 'leader of leaders' – we can't run a listening shift without a leader supporting it. The leader advises listeners on difficult calls, which may involve safeguarding, child callers, or contacting the emergency services if the caller asks for this. Leaders also debrief listeners at the end of each shift, enabling them to leave behind what they've heard and discussed. Vicki will coordinate and support our invaluable team of leaders.



Craig Kerrecoe (*pictured left*) has taken on the role of EDI lead. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion are important concepts for Samaritans, which wants to make the service as accessible as

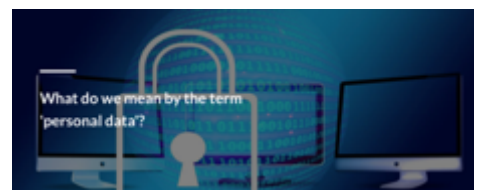
possible to both callers and volunteers. Craig will look at what support Sevenoaks volunteers may need to get the most out of their volunteering, and what training and advice we can take on to best support our volunteers.

Training news

We've encouraged our volunteers to learn more about the challenges facing the callers we help and have helped deliver a training session on supporting callers struggling with their mental health, alongside a session exploring transgender issues.

We've also created new guidance on how to respond to the question our recording system asks, after each call, on whether we explored suicidal feelings and behaviours. It's a delicate question which needs careful handling, and we've already seen more confidence in our listeners after issuing the advice.

Sevenoaks volunteers have also completed a required



training session on keeping data safe, part of our continuous development programme. We all deal with personal and sensitive information about our volunteers and our callers, and learning to look after that data in line with current data protection rules helps us maintain the quality of our service.

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Outreach events: we...

...had a fabulous – if slightly rain-soaked – time at Tonbridge Pride:



...supported the Sevenoaks Lions, major donors to Sevenoaks Samaritans, during their annual Heavy Horse Show at Shoreham:



...attended the regular Sevenoaks District Chamber of Commerce 'First Wednesday' networking event at the Aston Martin showroom in Riverhead:



...appeared at the Wellbeing Day in Seal:



...ran a stall on Sevenoaks Railway Station for World Suicide Prevention Day in September:

...and carried out two of our now regular schedule of visits to Edenbridge Foodbank (pictured right), as well as visiting Sevenoaks foodbank.



Pictures show (l-r, from top left, clockwise): Barbara, Chris, Sophia Stardust, Anne, Benny, Chris, Barbara, Karen, Lisa, Laura Trott MP, Mark, Anne, Coockey, Tom, Mary, Mark, Olivia, Mike, Sarah, Gail, Karen, Coockey

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Fundraising news



Reaching those in need

Our regular foodbank visits are supported by this year's £4.2K grant from Sevenoaks District Council, aimed at helping Sevenoaks residents most in need. We're also grateful to our other regular donors, such as the Lions and the Chamber of Commerce, and to the hundreds of people and organisations who've donated to us this year.



Greyhound puts us on track

The regulars at the Greyhound pub in Charcott, near Leigh, raised nearly £2,300 for us during three quiz nights run over the summer – a great set of events, and a

fabulous amount towards our fundraising target for the year.

Picture shows landlords Richard and Fran, centre, with Sevenoaks Samaritans volunteers Dave and Jane, with the famous 'big cheque'

London Marathon champ



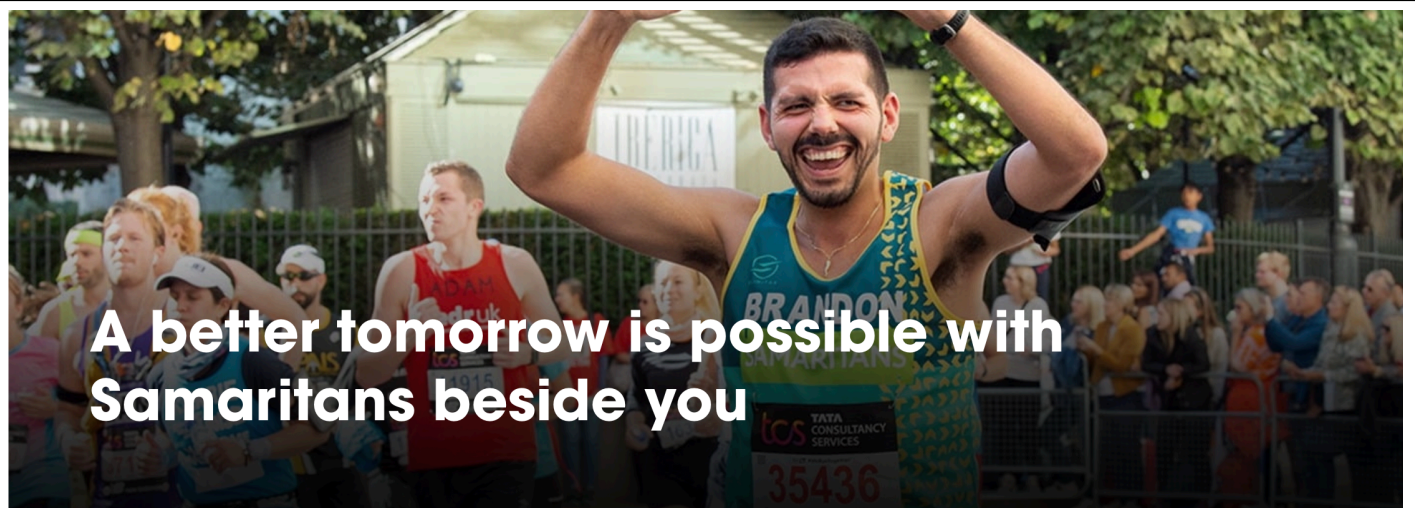
We have a champion in new Green district councillor Laura Manston (*pictured left*), who has won a place in next year's London Marathon, where she'll run in support of Sevenoaks Samaritans.

Laura, who was elected to represent Ash and New Ash Green near Dartford in May, visited Sevenoaks Samaritans earlier this summer with her fellow new Green councillors, part of our community engagement programme run by lead Dave Hickson.

Samaritans is the London Marathon's charity partner in 2024, and we're taking part under the new campaign headline Believe in Tomorrow (see below for an image from the campaign).

The event will help Sevenoaks Samaritans raise its own profile in the community next year, and we will, of course, be working with Laura to promote her fundraising run in the next six months.

Please support Laura on her [fundraising page](#).



A better tomorrow is possible with Samaritans beside you

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