

STOCKPORT SAMARITANS

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

10 JUNE 2009



Chairman's Report – Sally 87

On behalf of the whole branch we are again grateful to Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council for their continuing financial support. We received £5,000 from the main grant scheme for the financial year 2008/09, and it helps us that we have now been awarded funding for 3 years through to 2010/11. Stockport MBC also continue to provide us with accommodation and regular updates on the progress of the Hopes Carr regeneration scheme. Although the timeline for a possible move from our current premises remains uncertain, SMBC should assist us in the search for alternative premises, should that prove necessary.

In the meantime, and as advised by the Samaritans internal audit team, we have been working hard at increasing our income from fund-raising and donations, so that if we have to move premises, we have financial reserves to allow us to do this. The year end accounts show an increase in cash at the bank to around £30,000, which is the best financial situation for many years and a huge credit to all volunteers who have helped with their time and money in raising funds or securing donations. Special thanks this year go to Elizabeth 39 for a bridge evening, Dom 32 and Penny 50 for their marathon-running and walking, to Jo 86 for wedding donations, to Elaine 73 and Sharon 3 for securing further donations, to Graeme 88 for restoring and selling yet more computers and to Pam 51, our fund-raising coordinator, for overseeing another successful curry night and summer social and many smaller events! We would like to say a big thank you to everyone who has donated to the branch or supported us this year - through Christmas card sales and various raffles and the 100 club, you can be proud to have made a difference and to be providing for our secure future.

We have continued to raise our profile in the community, particularly with GPs and in the wider health sector. We have continued our presence on the Stepping Hill hospital maps, Andrew 27 supports the primary care trust's suicide prevention group and Mary 80 is planning an Outreach campaign with a small group of interested branch volunteers. We receive many enquiries on our website from prospective new Samaritans and you can publicise what we do by encouraging your friends and family to visit us at: <http://www.samaritans.org/stockport>.

My personal thanks go to all the members of the committee for their help and support over the past year – to Julie 47, Mary 4, Pam 51, Pam 55, Sharon 3 and particularly to Pat 57 for her work as Branch Treasurer, to Dave 25, who makes sure our building and facilities are maintained and to Mary 80, who supports the committee brilliantly and leads the branch so well. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as Chair and look forward to handing the reins to someone new. I am sure the branch will grow from strength to strength.

Director's Report – Mary 80

Yet another year in the life of Stockport Samaritans has flown by and the Deputies and I have thoroughly enjoyed supporting the branch and its wonderful volunteers. There is an amazing amount of team work that goes on in our branch to make it run smoothly and effectively. Combined with a real feeling of passion and commitment for what we do, it is always noticed and appreciated that so many volunteers do so much more than their minimum commitment to keep the branch running the way it does.

The only real area I feel we could do more in at the moment is 'Outreach' and I am planning to make it a real target for the next 12 months to make Stockport Samaritans more visible and reach out to some high risk groups in our local community. We have so many invaluable skills to offer and I do feel we have a dangerous tendency to sit and wait for the phone to ring. Being more proactive and letting the callers know we are here is going to be our next challenge.



A small outreach team has now been formed and will be meeting for the first time in the middle of June with, hopefully, some input from Stan who is the newly appointed Regional Outreach Co-ordinator, to get us on the right track. The 'team' is simply made up of volunteers who have expressed an interest over the last few months, but the date for each meeting will always be on the calendar in the duty room and it will always be an 'open' meeting. All volunteers will be welcome to join us at any time. The more people we get involved the more we can do, it is not something one person can do single-handedly. Andrew 27 has been working hard on his own to forge links and played a big part in attending the Stockport PCT meetings. Hopefully we can build on that work with your support.



At the next AGM in 2010, fingers crossed, I will have a newly appointed Director sitting next to me at the front! The working party to select a new Director will probably begin around February time, which will come round pretty quickly. If I have only managed to achieve one thing during my time as Director, I hope I have shown that it does not have to be a full time job. There are many people who are willing to help and many newer volunteers are really keen to get involved in moving the branch onwards and upwards.

The final mention must go to Jack I who sadly died last month after his battle with cancer. Jack had been a committed volunteer at our Branch for over 10 years. He played a big part in the Committee and did many entertaining speakers appointments in the local community. He will be sadly missed.

Please continue to support Stockport Samaritans in whatever way you can and remember that we should be incredibly proud of what we do and the fantastic service that we provide to vulnerable people. Keep up the good work!

Treasurer's Report – Pat 57

I am pleased to report that the branch is making a healthy profit.

Income

We continue to be grateful to SMBC for their grant which covers the majority of our rent and electricity.

Income from donations continues to increase and we have benefited from donations from several local organisations. Sincere thanks to all these organisations and also to individuals who have so kindly raised money for the branch or given donations. We do rely on these for all our other expenses.

We have also been remembered in a number of wills and have also received money in memory of ex-Samaritans who have sadly passed away during the year.

Fundraising

We have had another successful year despite not having the tin shakes of previous years. A number of events including another fantastic Curry/quiz night added to our funds as well as bringing many members of the branch, friends and ex Samaritans together socially.

Thanks to all those who organised and attended the events and those who gave of their time to help run them.



Expenditure

The branch continues to function without any paid staff and therefore administration and housekeeping costs are kept very low. Telephone is, as usual, our main expenditure but changes to the system means that our bill is a lot lower than last year and hopefully this will remain a more reasonable cost for us in future.

I would like to thank the Director, Chair, Committee and Branch Members for all their help and support during the year.

On Call Support (OCS) Report – Joan 82

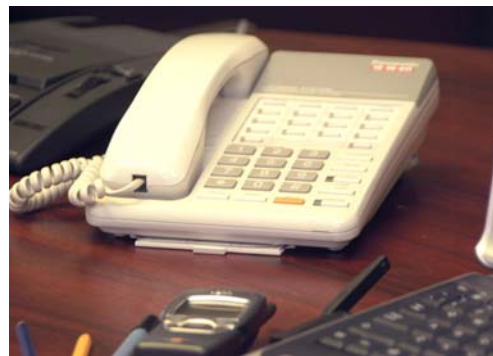
Over the past year the On Call Support Team have been there to support volunteers on every shift – no mean feat when several experienced members of the original team stepped down during the year. After being trained some of the newer members of the Branch have now become valued members of the Team.

Recently two members of the Initial Training Team have also joined us – so covering the shifts is becoming easier. This will be particularly important over the summer months when volunteers on the Team take their annual holidays.

In addition to providing daily support to volunteers, the Team meets once a month to discuss anything that has arisen during their shifts on call. This is an essential exchange of information as it includes concerns about volunteers' wellbeing, caller care problems, procedural issues and awareness of good practice which helps to ensure that the Branch continues to provide the best possible service to callers. It is also a forum where the Team members can provide support for each other.

As a result of discussions at the meetings it was decided that it would be useful to create a Quick Reference Book – so that the details of procedures would be easily accessible when taking calls. Jo 86 offered to take on this task and a draft copy has been completed. It is now waiting for feedback from volunteers prior to completion.

Finally I would just like to thank all the members of the Team for the continued commitment and support they have provided to the Branch over the past year.



Caller Care Report – Dom 32

Over the past year we have routinely checked the Call Log and messages received (including those on the Whiteboard) to maintain a record of Frequent Callers, callers with Care Plans and new Callers of Concern. From this information and details exchanged with other branches we have been able to identify and track these callers and, when necessary, develop guidance for their support. This information together with more general advice and news of recent developments has been published in the *Bulletins* issued over the year.

I would like to thank the members of the Caller Care Team, Pam 49, John 21, Sonya 30 and a special thanks to Margaret 28, who has now stood down from CC but whose experience has been invaluable – many thanks.

The branch has been represented at Regional Caller Care meetings over the year and will be hosting the November RCC Meeting at our own branch.

In our own regular meetings, our team has checked on routine actions and discussed current Callers of Concern issues from the Regional meetings and the latest *Bulletin*. We have also reviewed current emails every 4 months by applying the self-assessment tool to a random, anonymous sample. Results are posted on the Caller Care notice board and continue to be more than acceptable.

We are about to undertake a review of the Caller Care Folders and hope to improve the information on our specific branch callers of concern soon. We hope that this will make for easier use of the folders.

I would like to thank those Samaritans who have provided feedback through the year, both positive and negative, and to acknowledge the efforts of our Caller Care Team who have endeavoured to provide appropriate and consistent support for both our callers and our volunteers.



Selection and Recruitment Report – Gill 89

Selection in 2008 undertook a facelift in the way we now choose to send out selection packs. An email address has been set up for Stockport Samaritans and all email enquiries receive selection packs by return. It has meant that applicants can enquire, receive information and return application forms on-line. It has also meant that good communication lines can be kept open with prospective applicants.

Since June 2008 we have held two successful information/selection sessions, and have welcomed 17 new volunteers into the branch. I would like to thank all the members of the team, Mary 4, Dave 65, Pam 55, Jenny 70, Debra 42 and Penny 50 for their valued input, enthusiasm and hard work during the year and look forward to the next 12 months.



Initial Training (SIT) Report – Graeme 88

Once again, following on from Gill's excellent selection evenings, we have run two very successful training courses this year. The well established Initial Training Course now involves Samaritans Initial Training Part 2 - this is a chance to review progress, reinforce key points and discuss any issues that may have arisen. This module must be completed before trainee Samaritans can get their number.

Many thanks to Joan 82, Dave 25, Margaret 28, Becky 17 and Pam 49 for the time that it has taken to help deliver this training and the vast experience they bring to it. Training new Samaritans has been a great experience and allowed myself and the training team to get to know the newer members of the branch well. Feedback from the Trainees has been excellent and all seem to have found it a rewarding experience.



Volunteer Care Report – Liz 79

This year has been a very challenging one for many volunteers in our Branch. Life seems to have dealt many Stockport Samaritans a very tough hand and as a result, the volunteer care service has focussed on offering support to those needing long periods of leave.

On behalf of the Stockport Branch, I would like to thank all the volunteers who have had long term leave and managed to return to our Branch to offer their support to our callers. This takes a special kind of person with an amazing degree of commitment - it is great to have you all back!



Volunteer care has also offered the following services:

- sorting out leave and staying in regular contact with those on leave
- follow up calls to volunteers who have dealt with difficult calls. In most cases OCS placed a request and the calls were in addition to OCS follow ups
- confidential support to volunteers on private and Samaritan related issues
- an introduction to the service for new volunteers in the form of an informational letter.

All Samaritans have different needs with regards to support and who they wish to give them that support. The volunteer care service is built around each individual Samaritan who gets in touch and their wishes. This year has included text , email and regular phone contact by myself as well as Tony 66 and Mary 80.

I would especially like to thank Tony 66 for standing in for me for the past three months. This has meant the volunteer care service has remained consistent and available. In addition to volunteer care, Tony 66 has continued to offer the Sams Sam service for which I am very grateful. Thanks Tony.

Branch Email – Pam 49

Last year we responded to 252 emails, with 25 of these received from people under the age of 16, and 71 from age 16-25. There were 98 contacts of unknown age and 143 indicated they were at risk of suicide.

From this information we can see that for many young people email is the preferred method of contact.

Our aim for 2009 therefore, is to increase the number of people we support by email, and with your help we will be able to achieve this.

Finally, Margaret 28, who was instrumental in setting up the email facility at Stockport Branch and has been our email co-ordinator ever since, has stepped down this year. I would like to say a huge 'thank you' on behalf of all of us for all the hard work and commitment that she has given to the role – she will be a very hard act to follow!



Branch Statistics — Dave 25

The number of Samaritan contacts increased by 20% in 2008, as a result of the increased number of shifts which were covered, following an increase in recruitment. The proportion of snap calls decreased, whilst the number of callers expressing suicidal feelings increased by nearly 50%. The large increase in emails answered reflects the number of newly trained volunteers.

The number of follow up calls offered more than doubled, again probably as a result of the increase in the proportion of newly trained volunteers. The large increase in face to face visitors is mainly due to one persistent caller. The underlying number of visitors has not increased.

Caller Summary for 2007/08

		2008	2007	Change
Total contacts		18651	15966	16.8%
Snap calls		9134	8127	12.4%
Samaritan contacts		9517	7839	21.4%
	By telephone	9208	7670	20.1%
	Face to face	56	12	366.7%
	By email	252	157	60.5%
Male contacts		4754	3871	22.8%
Female contacts		4506	3801	18.5%
Uncertain		257	167	53.9%
Suicidal feelings				
	Not explored	1895	1476	28.4%
	Explored but no response	157	220	-28.6%
	Suicidal feelings expressed	2028	1358	49.3%
	No suicidal thoughts	7489	6481	15.6%
Follow Up				
	Offered	104	42	147.6%
	Accepted	41	18	127.8%

Our Mission

Samaritans is available 24 hours a day to provide confidential emotional support for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those which may lead to suicide.

Our Vision

Samaritans' vision is for a society in which fewer people die by suicide, people are able to explore their feelings and people are able to acknowledge and respect the feelings of others.

Our Values

Samaritans' values are based on these beliefs:

- The importance of having the opportunity to explore difficult feelings
- That being listened to, in confidence, and accepted without prejudice, can alleviate despair and suicidal feelings
- That everyone has the right to make fundamental decisions about their own life, including the decision to die by suicide.

