

# SAMARITANS

Weston Super Mare  
& North Somerset



Annual report 2021–22



## **Director's Report**

The second year affected by the Covid pandemic. At the beginning of April, we were still in our temporary ops room on the second floor of the building – large and airy, but very problematic in terms of access. However, the conversion of the shop (funded by a generous allocation of funding from the Pears Foundation) to a ground floor operations room was well in hand and we moved into the new facility before the end of the month. The space is not ideal (because our building is far from ideal), but it is larger than the room we had before, and the protective measures put in place (the extractor fan, the air purifier and the CO2 monitor), have been successful in protecting volunteers against the risk of infection. The impact on the branch of the pandemic subsided gradually through the year as restrictions were relaxed, at least until the Omicron variant came along. Now a rather deceptive normality reigns once more.

2021/22 was a year of major change for Samaritans nationally. Concerns about the effectiveness of our safeguarding procedures led to a raft of new measures designed to ensure the protection of our callers and volunteers: revision of the Safeguarding Policy itself to reflect more precisely current legislation, the introduction of selective call monitoring by a central team to check the quality and safety of calls, the gradual development of a centralised hub to deal with email, implementation of a concerns line and the implementation of a central caller support and safeguarding hub, gradually taking the caller support function out of the branch. There has also been a refreshed programme of training on safeguarding for all volunteers which continues. These were major changes with a potentially disturbing impact on volunteers used to different ways of working. Our volunteers took the changes in their stride, understanding the imperatives that lay behind them, and they continue to do so.

There was one significant failure in 21/22. We did not succeed in appointing a new Director. I am therefore doing an extra and final year in the role. The situation is not ideal in the sense that an interim Director cannot lead the branch as a new Director could. The time horizon is limited and that impacts on decision-making and the ability to plan for the future. I very much hope that the new round of recruitment that will start very shortly will bear fruit. It's a vital role and one which is rewarding and fulfilling – because of the quality and commitment of our volunteers and the importance of the work we do.

### **The Service**

The Samaritan service has continued to thrive in Weston. A few figures will illustrate this. In 20/21, we were open for 3,044 hours – an overall increase of 7%, on the previous year despite the pandemic. But in 2021/22, we kept the branch open for 3,343 hours, an increase of almost 10%. The number of calls answered increased significantly too from 13,271 (20/21) to 14,362 (8% more). We responded to fewer emails during the year – 637 as opposed to 867 the previous year. I think this is accounted for by the changes the email service taking place nationally. The Face to Face service continued to be suspended throughout the year.

## **Fundraising**

Phil deals with this in his Treasurer's report so I will not go into detail here. Again, we had a successful year which bolstered our financial position in a way which stands us in good stead at a time when the economic storm clouds seem to be gathering. I must mention the branch's stellar performance in the July 21 Samarathon event, when the relatively small number of volunteers who participated raised £8650 – the second highest figure nationally and, as Phil says, the highest per capita figure across all branches.

Once again, thanks to John for his oversight of our fundraising operations (not to mention our marketing) over such a long period, and to Lucy for her work in applying for and getting grant funding for the branch.

## **Branch Leadership Team**

Ann, ably assisted by Jo, managed our **caller support** as effectively as ever, while the changes which would largely take the function out of the branch were gradually implemented. Local responsibility for Caller Support plans was transferred to the Caller Support and Safeguarding Hub at the end of November 2021 and in January this year, responsibility for callers flagged by volunteers to caller support also passed to the Hub. The DD role in the branch was therefore diminished to a point where it was no longer needed. In April this year, Ann took over responsibility for volunteer recruitment.

Millie had continued to keep our **recruitment** moving forward very positively with twenty three new Samaritans selected for core training during the year despite the impact of Omicron. She stood down at the end of March at the end of her three year stint (and six years as part of BLT). We are very grateful for all the work she has done in that time, and we miss her. Thanks also to everyone who has been involved in interviewing potential volunteers.

Training went from strength to strength under Ruby's calm guidance with the same skilful **training** team comprising Tracey, George, Jo, Jan (and myself). Three Core Training courses ran during the year, followed up by three Embedding courses. All this training was done online, our intentions to reinstate an element of face to face training were stymied by the Omicron variant. There's a huge amount of work involved in organising and running our training and Ruby performs her role creatively, effectively and uncomplainingly.

Amy performed her **volunteer support** role as efficiently and caringly as ever, standing down at the end of March after three years in the role. It was a tough period to be in charge of volunteer care and Amy managed the role wonderfully. It seems strange that she is no longer part of BLT. Jo has taken over though and stepped into the DD role with great energy and enthusiasm. (Jo is also now our safeguarding lead.)

Jodie continues as our **Branch Secretary**, efficient, proactive and thorough, overseeing the administration of the branch with quiet effectiveness and keeping the Director on the right track most of the time.

Phil, our **Treasurer**, continued to supervise the financial progress of the branch with regular updates on our financial progress and careful oversight of our spending at each BLT meeting. I should also mention his magnificent personal contribution to

our finances as the biggest Samarathon fundraiser by miles (having completed a sponsored 26 miles of the West Mendip Way one rainy day in July).

Rachell continued to maintain Samaritan IT accounts and **systems**, keeping the rota management system up to date and continuing to manage the complex administration of the DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks for new and existing volunteers. Her troubleshooting of the problems we encounter from time to time in logging on (often at unsocial hours) was invaluable (and I should mention that she has done more Leader shifts than anyone else in the branch).

**Outreach** work (led by Mac) was still limited in 20/21, as no personal contact activities were again possible throughout the year. Happily, we are now back in business and talks and other outreach activities are taking place again. Mac has organised an awareness stall at the station (as part of 'Blue Monday') and other events are in the pipeline at last. He is also the best jazz trumpeter in Samaritans (nationally), by a street!

### **And finally.....**

This is my fourth and last annual report. There are still about six months to go before I stand down. I very much hope that by then we will have a new Director ready and raring to go. It has been a privilege to be responsible for the branch over the past three and a half years. Inevitably, people have come and gone in that time but, throughout, it has been a pleasure to have a group of volunteers who are positive, open to change, flexible and, above all, dedicated to meeting the needs, of people who need our support. We Samaritans have lived through difficult and challenging times recently, not just because of the pandemic but also because of very significant organisational change, driven from the centre and largely out of our control. Hardly a moan or complaint to be heard.... (well, apart from parking and extremes of temperature in the ops room maybe.)

Thanks to you all.

Andy 646  
Director

## **Treasurer's report**

Income for the year was £35,774, and expenditure for the year totalled £29,306, giving a surplus for the year of £6,468.

Donations and legacies totalled £26,318, which included a very generous donation of £5,000 from the Howard Motor Group, £3,000 very kindly donated by the Rotary Club of Weston Super Mare, a further £2,150 from GWR, and a fluid £850 from the Wedmore beer festival, as well as number of smaller, and much appreciated, gifts from a variety of PCCs, companies and individuals. As in previous years, many volunteers donated back their travel expenses which allowed the charity to recover Gift Aid, totalling almost £2,000.

Fundraising activities raised a further £9,456, thanks mainly to the Samarathon team whose efforts raised an amazing £8,650 .(the highest per capita collection figure across all Samaritan branches). Other fund raising activities included a number of talks given by our outreach DD, Mac 662 who also organised a fund-raising gig by his jazz group, Swing Fever.

The bank balance at 31 March 2022 was £54,587, of which £11,587 related to restricted funds. The Branch Leadership Team ((BLT) took the decision to invest £60,000 in the M&G Charibond fund in January 2022; the value of this investment had fallen to £58,830 at the year end, reflecting a disappointing performance in what are now difficult economic times.

Financial accounts are produced on a periodic basis and the Treasurer prepares a monthly summary of the Charity's financial position. The BLT reviews the latest report at each of its bi-monthly meetings, to ensure that both income and expenditure are closely scrutinised.

Phil 721  
Treasurer

Samaritans of Weston Super Mare  
and North Somerset CIO

Statement of Financial Activities  
For the year ended 31 March 2022

	Unrestricted fund £	Restrict ed fund £	<b>31.3.22 Total Funds £</b>	31.3.21 Total Funds £
<b>INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM</b>				
Donations and legacies	26,318		26,318	54,043
Fundraising activities and grants	9456	-	9,456	21,587
Shop income	-	-	-	848
<b>Total</b>	<b>35,774</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>35,774</b>	<b>76,478</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE ON</b>				
Raising funds	331	-	331	395
Shop expenditure	-	-	-	5,892
Charitable activities	27,677	680	28,357	23,802
Building improvements	<u>618</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>618</u>	<u>18,550</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>28,626</b>	<b>680</b>	<b>29,306</b>	<b>48,639</b>
<b>NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)</b>	<b>7,148</b>	<b>(680)</b>	<b>6,468</b>	<b>27,839</b>
<b>Transfers between funds</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Realised losses on investment assets</b>	<b>(1,170)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(1,170)</b>	<b>-</b>
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	<b>5,978</b>	<b>(680)</b>	<b>5,298</b>	<b>27,839</b>
<b>RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS</b>				
<b>Total funds brought forward</b>	<b>95,502</b>	<b>12,267</b>	<b>107,769</b>	<b>79,930</b>
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<b>TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD</b>	<b><u>101,480</u></b>	<b><u>11,587</u></b>	<b><u>113,067</u></b>	<b><u>107,769</u></b>

# We're here to listen

Call free day or night on

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