

# Newsletter October 2023

## Update from the Branch

It has been a busy time at Eastbourne Samaritans since our last Newsletter in February. We had a very well attended AGM on July 14 with an absorbing and entertaining guest speaker, the **Rev'd Richard Coles**.



He spoke movingly about his own period in his life when he was suicidal and also recalled his experience as a pop star, broadcaster, writer and clergyman. Much of his experience with parishioners resonates with what we do.

In particular he spoke movingly about grief and the expression of feelings over the recent loss of his partner.

We told him that he would make a good Samaritan and invited him to join us and he also confirmed that the Communards will not be reforming!

### Chelsea Flower Show May 2023



## Mental Health Minister Maria Caulfield MP visits Branch June 2023



The Samaritans is increasingly involved in policy and advocacy work and was actively involved in the new Suicide Prevention Strategy for England which was published in September 2023. Other policy change includes the Online Safety Bill on restricting social media.

We welcomed Maria Caulfield, MP for Lewes and the Minister of Mental Health, who came to the Branch in June.

Maria showed considerable interest in what we do and how we do it and spent time in the duty room. The issue of the need for National Government support to measures to address suicide prevention at Beachy Head was discussed.

## Chelsea here we come!

While the Samaritan Brand is well known and most people seem to know what we do, its always important to have a presence at high profile events that are on national TV.

In May this year the Samaritan Listening Garden by award winning designer and Samaritan volunteer **Darren Hawkes** was one the highlights of the Annual Chelsea Flower Show and given high profile by the Duchess of Cambridge and others.

Here is **Jane 1198** getting the **Listening Garden** ready for the many fans of the Chelsea Flower show.



The Samaritans Patron, King Charles III, invited Eastbourne Sams to his Coronation in May and we were given ringside seats for this event though the lucky volunteers had to brave the elements for the parade.



The Bank Holiday was marked by the King's initiative called the **Big Help Out** which was a national day of volunteering. Here are **Alison 961** and me in the village of **Ripe** with the Deputy Lieutenant of East Sussex, Mrs Deborah Bedford DL.



*Deputy Lieutenant of Sussex at Big Help Out*

## Support to Schools, Prisons and Network Rail continues

We have continued to work with **Lewes Prison**, providing support to the listening service with weekly visits to the prison supporting both the prison listeners and prison staff.

Samaritans updated its **Children's Policy in September** and we will continue to support Secondary Schools, raising awareness of what services we can provide and the provision of emotional support.

We were at the Big Futures Career fair for Sussex Secondary schools in February and at Heathfield Community College in June. There were further school visits in the Autumn term.



*Being cheerful at the Big Futures Fair for Sussex Schools*

## Face-to-Face is Important

We are one of the few branches in the South East of England that is open for face to face callers—from 10:30AM every day to 8:30PM.

We are receiving around 20 callers per month, the second highest in the country after Central London.

We receive both regular callers and occasional visitors. They all need our support and it remains a really key part of what we do. Importantly people in the Eastbourne region know that we are there if they need us.

**Fundraising and raising awareness of what we do go together.**

People see us in Eastbourne and want to know more about what we do. We are always amazed at how generous the public are and how successful our fund raising events have been. In the last financial year we raised £9,522 from events. Below some of the recent highlights over the summer.



*Bluebell was a fantastic result for us in 2023 .*

**We broke all records at the Arlington Bluebell in May raising over £6,000** and our team of volunteers pulled off an amazing bake off , selling out on the first day and baking through the night to satisfy demand on day 2 . A big thanks to our Samaritan friend **John McCutcheon** and his family for enabling this wonderful resource to be shared with us and other voluntary groups in the Eastbourne area.



We were a group of sea creatures at Eastbourne Carnival on May 27th.

We were all sorts of fish and friendly sea creatures which made a great connection with the public. What are those jellyfish at the back doing?

***Stay Afloat with the Samaritans– Sea Creatures Eastbourne Carnival***



The Sometimes Music Festival in August at Grove Theatre raised nearly £800.

A big thanks for our friend and concert organiser, **Ori Powell**.



In October at **Quiz Night** we all had a good laugh trying to remember who—other than Judi Dench—has played M in James Bond.

Big thanks to **Jo and Paul Richards** for organising the Quiz at Langney Sports club and raising over £700 for our Branch.



## Why are we still here after 70 years?

The Samaritan service is in increasing demand and this has not been helped by the recent events of COVID, the cost of living crisis, and the unstable world. We are now reaching out to new audiences and are present in different places.

Our growth is down to a simple thing-many people don't necessarily need professional help, they just want someone to talk to and help them through the problems that they are facing. We talk to people of all ages and from all walks of life and age on all issues: family, marriage, abuse, anxiety, bullying, stress, loneliness, depression. All calls matter and for many there is nowhere else to call to have a non-judgemental conversation.

**Whatever  
you're facing  
We're here  
to listen**

Call free day or night on  
**116 123**  
Email  
[jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

A registered charity

**SAMARITANS**



[samaritans.org](http://samaritans.org)

Every 10 seconds, a Samaritan responds to a call for help.

Chad Varrah launched the service 70 years ago in the parish of St Stephen in the City of London as a '999 service for the suicidal'. In 1957 we became the first 24 hour helpline service in the world.

Our Listener service in prisons was started in 1991 and the partnership with Network rail in 2011. The freephone 116 123 number started just over 10 years ago. The service will continue to develop with new methods of reaching people.

In the meantime Eastbourne Branch is turning 60 in February 2025. Get ready for the celebration!

Eastbourne and District Samaritans  
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**Registered Charity No. 1170508**

**SAMARITANS**

**Eastbourne & District**

## We love our shop at 34 Grove Road



We love our shop. Visit it at 34 Grove Road and find some bargains and amazing bric-a-bric and stylish clothes.

Jo and Raymond and their team of volunteers do a wonderful job bringing in nearly half of our annual income. The charity shop world is increasingly competitive and our team know how to make it work!



## Thank you for your support.

Our Branch is a separate entity registered with the Charity Commission and we are affiliated to the national Samaritans. We raise all our own funds for the Branch which costs £50,000/year to run.

The Haven needs to be kept warm 145 hours per week for 52 weeks a year. We receive half of our income from our wonderful shop on Grove Road, but we have to find the other half from fundraising activities and donations.

See our website [www.samaritans.org/eastbourne](http://www.samaritans.org/eastbourne) if you would like to make a donation or become a **Friend**. All the money goes to running the branch. **We are all volunteers.**