

**SAMARITANS**

South West Herts

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

**Annual report 2019–20**



South West Herts Samaritans provides confidential support by telephone, face-to-face visits, and email. Samaritans discontinued support through SMS texts in February 2020.

Total number of telephone calls answered by the branch  
in 2019-20: 18,580

Number of face-to-face visitors: 55

Number of SMS texts (to February 2020): 2,677

Number of emails: 3,355

Number of volunteers at 31st March 2020:  
127 (including 7 support volunteers)

## Director and Chair's Report

South West Herts Samaritans branch has 120 active listening volunteers and 7 support volunteers. These volunteers have done an amazing job answering 18,580 calls, 2,677 texts (this service was stopped in all branches at the beginning of February), and 3,355 emails and meeting 55 face-to-face visitors. That is a total of 24,667 contacts - without taking into consideration our Outreach programme and HMP The Mount Listener Scheme.

We had an extremely active year in recruiting volunteers; we trained 35 volunteers and have a further 16 waiting to complete the last two core sessions (which had to be postponed because of Covid-19).

Outreach, our work in the local community, has continued to develop this year with the exciting Facing the Future programme in partnership with Cruse ready to launch once the virus is under control. Our involvement with local schools has continued as has our relationship with Network Rail. All these initiatives are supported by our branch volunteers over and beyond their shifts.

We provide key services to HMP The Mount, and the prison team is working tirelessly within the forever moving constraints of the system. We have 13 prison Listeners in place with 8 trained in this financial year, thereby enabling the service to remain available to vulnerable prisoners.

Our IT team continues to support the branch, ensuring its smooth running and providing timely responses to any issues that arise.

This year we successfully ran the Ongoing Training programme on our Branch Day so that all volunteers had the opportunity to fulfil their commitment of 5 hours training within the 12 month period. The mandatory ongoing mentoring was also a success - enabling volunteers to brush up on their skills.

Several extra shift leaders have been trained this year. Shift leaders are invaluable members of the volunteer team – without them we would be unable to keep the rota going and deliver our service.

This has again been a busy and constructive year for the caller support team at our branch who are committed to providing the right level of emotional support for all of our callers. A number of callers have been assigned to the branch and we have been successful in providing intensive and individually planned support for these.

We have been challenged by the impact of Covid-19 and are proud that our service has continued to function with social distancing and robust health and safety processes in place. More shifts have been opened, reflecting the availability of many of our volunteers even though several have been in isolation. Two of our isolated volunteers have participated in a new national initiative to enable responding to emails from home.

All face-to-face contacts, including most Outreach activities, have been stopped until government guidance allows us to continue. Covid-19 has also brought its challenges to The Mount with new processes having been put into place.

I would like to thank our Deputy Directors, Trustees and all our volunteers for their continued commitment and motivation in providing an invaluable, safe, non-judgemental place for people to talk and be heard.

Jane 2346

## Outreach

Most of the Outreach work this year has been on maintaining and growing all the great initiatives we already had in place. However, there has also been one very exciting major new initiative - one that I tentatively voiced for the first time at our last AGM, one year ago.

During this year, we have formed a 'Facing the Future' partnership with Herts Cruse Bereavement Care to provide group support for those bereaved by suicide. We were very fortunate that Councillor Anthony Rowlands funded the required training (which was prescriptive and expensive) from his Members' Discretionary Fund. Nine of us gave up two complete weekends for the excellent but demanding training and, after many months of planning, all was ready for our first support group to be held in April at our branch. However, Covid-19 has put paid to these wonderful plans for the time being (along with so much else)!

The continuing initiatives include our Schools Programme, in which a small team of volunteers goes into a primary or secondary school to deliver an assembly talk to a specific year group and/or workshops to smaller groups on various aspects of achieving good emotional health. What the students take from these sessions will hopefully stay with them for life – reinforced regularly by their teachers under the wellbeing part of the National Curriculum. Thank you so much to Pip 2396 for running this programme so ably, and for expanding our team of volunteers. They are working well together and forming lasting relationships with some of the schools - one of which had wanted us to speak to all of its students (aged 3 to 10) and teaching staff, as well as to the Consortium of Head Teachers in Borehamwood, which was a big undertaking that we were happy to fulfil.

Samaritans and Network Rail have a successful formal partnership, and we are fortunate in having Simon 1113 to lead this for our branch – we owe him many thanks.

We have supported several national campaigns during the year focussed on 'Real People, Real Stories' where ordinary men share their stories to encourage others to seek support. These included World Suicide Prevention Day on 10 September and World Mental Health Day on 10 October. In addition, we have held our own branch events, such as a full-day Roadshow in Watford town centre in June and various 'appearances' at the main national rail stations in our area such as St Albans City, Watford Junction, Elstree & Borehamwood, Berkhamsted and Hemel Hempstead. These activities have resulted in many worthwhile interactions with the public – raising awareness and providing emotional support.

Other ongoing Outreach work carried out by our volunteers has included visits to Watford General Hospital and other medical centres, and regular visits to support family members and visitors to prisoners in HMP The Mount.

For the first time, we took a stall at Herts Pride and were able to use our newly-purchased gazebo as a much-appreciated base.

We have also been invited to give ad hoc talks to various other organisations that want to promote the idea of emotional good health within their staff, end-users, or clients. These have included ASOS and our construction neighbour, Jarvis.

I want to end by thanking everyone who has been actively involved in Outreach events over the year, as well as those who have supported these enterprises in other ways.

Hazel 2422

## Prison Support Team

The Listener Scheme is a peer support scheme with aims to reduce self-harm and suicide. Prisoners are selected, trained, and supported by Samaritan volunteers to become Listeners. Listeners provide confidential, emotional support to their fellow prisoners who are struggling to cope. This year Bill 953, Farduse 2426, Fran 2268, Jenny 2436, Rosemary 1702, and Peter 1125 did a great job of supporting the Listener Scheme at HMP The Mount.

This year, we have had a team of between 12 and 25 Listeners, working hard to cover a 24/7 rota providing much needed emotional support to their peers. They have been focusing on key areas of the prison, including the segregation unit and induction sessions for newly arriving men. We have had three different Listener Coordinators this year, due to the initial coordinator finishing his annual term, and then an unexpected transfer of the newly elected coordinator. The Listener Coordinator is an elected Listener, who leads the team and manages much of the day-to-day operations. It is not an easy role and all three men who have held the role this year have shown equal levels of dedication, but three very distinct approaches, keeping things very refreshing! As a branch we are extremely grateful for their input.

One highlight for the year was an ongoing training module delivered by Mind to the Listeners on hearing voices in prison. The Listeners were told that people who report “hearing voices” are often assumed to have mental health problems and prescribed a whole host of medication. The group were lively in their discussion of whether this was the most constructive approach and came up with many ways to talk to their callers about these experiences. I have rarely seen the Listeners so engaged in a topic, and they were not shy about asking a plethora of questions. It reminded me how important it is to develop our knowledge to best support our callers, no matter how experienced we are.

Covid-19 has obviously had a huge impact on the Listener Scheme and prisoners in general. Men are faced with 23.5 hour lockdown, no visitors and little meaningful activity. The Listener Scheme has been suspended due to the risk of infection. However, our men remain in touch and keen to resume duties when things return to some form of normality. Watford branch has been key to enabling several prison teams across the London region to set up a freephone line between their prison support teams and Listeners. Three further prisons now operate a line based on Watford’s pre-Covid Listener coordinator phoneline.

If we are to see something positive as a result of the devastating Covid-19 prison lockdown, I think it could be an accelerated introduction of technology into prisons. There have been many creative discussions about how technology in prisons can be used for rehabilitative purposes – already we have in-cell phones for most prisoners in England and Wales. Scotland has recently been discussing the introduction of function-restricted mobile phones for prisoners. With research showing human connections, with family, friends and otherwise, are one of the most influential factors in a person’s rehabilitation, I can only view these changes as a positive thing. I also look forward to seeing how more technology can further facilitate the operation of the Listener Scheme.

Sally 2414

## Publicity

Our basic strategy has been to work on raising awareness of South West Herts Samaritans in the community, with the aim of not only ensuring that people will be more likely to reach out to us for support, but also that some will consider becoming volunteers or provide financial support.

### Social media

Given the restrictions on Outreach, it has been more important than ever to use social media to promote what we're doing, and we've been working hard to increase our social media footprint and engage with the community using Twitter and our website. We're seeing a steady increase in followers, which means we'll be able to reach a wider audience when promoting the work we do and the opportunities to support us.

### Watford Observer

We continue to have a good relationship with the Watford Observer who have given us the opportunity to write a column each month. They are also keen to keep in contact with us for different initiatives throughout the year. The Watford Observer and its website reaches 75% of people in the local area and is a critical access point to our community.

### Looking ahead

We intend to continue to utilise the capabilities provided by social media to reach out and promote the amazing work we do. We will be engaging more with local businesses and members of the public to grow the follower base and spread our reach within the area. In addition, we will be using the branch website more actively, publishing news stories and events, which we can direct people to using social media. With more people visiting the website we hope for more exposure of the services as well as engagement in fundraising activities.



Jason 1129

## Fundraising

We have continued to engage with, and emphasise our support for, our local community. By doing this, we have stimulated interest from a broad range of individuals and organisations who have generously supported South West Herts Samaritans - either by nominating us as a sponsored charity, organising events and fundraising activities, or simply by donating in recognition of our efforts. The Covid-19 restrictions have limited community engagement, but our volunteers are still providing a telephone listening service, and we still need your support. You can do this through direct donations, fundraising activities, and/or online shopping sites such as EasyFundraising and Amazon Smile.

We want to thank everyone who organised fundraising activities in 2019/20 and gave donations. We value all contributions but would like to give special mention to the Old Gits of Bar Bodega who raised £1,900 and to Watford Boys Grammar School who raised over £2,500 for us through the school year. Other contributors also included the Rotary Club of Hemel Hempstead, Homewood Road United Reform Church, and Bushey & Oxhey Methodist Church. We are also grateful to Haberdashers' Aske's School for Girls for the free use of their wonderful premises.

The pupils of Parkside Community Primary School raised funds through contributions for a 'no-uniform' day, and Watford Grammar School for Girls gave a donation, both in recognition of the value of our school assembly talks and workshops. This year our National Citizen Service partner team raised over £1,500 from helping with awareness and collections at two Waitrose stores and doing a sponsored walk. Thank you to them and to their generous friends and family.

Other local supporters over the year included Specsavers in Watford, who collected for us on Brew Monday by offering free hearing aid tests (and cakes) in return for a donation, and Waitrose in Berkhamsted who contributed £462 through their community token programme. And we continue to appreciate the donations from Kingsbury Barn Rental, the Matthew Lovell Memorial Match and the Abbots Langley Tough Ten.

Legacies and donations in memory of loved ones were much higher this year and we want to thank all involved for their generosity and thoughtfulness.

We are appreciative of grants from St Albans Cathedral, the Childwick Trust, and the St Albans Fund for the Future. In addition, Co-op members throughout the UK can now nominate us to receive payments from their local community fund.

In donating their time, all of our volunteers contribute greatly to the success of the branch, but I want to highlight the work of Jenny 1878 in pursuing the successful grant claims mentioned above, and Colin 1131 in organising the Christmas Carols by Candlelight at St Johns Church in Watford. The concert was a hugely enjoyable event and we hope to be able to repeat it this December.

Last but by no means least, we owe many thanks to all those volunteers, and their family and friends, who helped to raise over £4,800 from our supermarket and town centre collections in St Albans, Rickmansworth, Radlett, and Berkhamsted. Collections form a substantial part of our income and we hope that we can restart them later this year.

In the meantime, we are encouraging individual and corporate supporters to donate directly through our website, run virtual versions of fundraising events, such as Brew Monday and 'marathons' and to register for, and use, Amazon Smile and EasyFundraising when they shop online. We are seeing increased use of our VirginMoneyGiving fundraising site, but it would be good to see more!

Patti 2440

## Structure, Governance and Management

South West Herts Samaritans is a branch of Samaritans established as a separate charity within a federated structure.

The charity is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) with a formal affiliation agreement to the Samaritans Central Charity.

The charity's governing document is its constitution which details the objects, governance structure, membership rules and rules of the organisation. The charity's relationship with the Central Charity is governed by the Branch Agreement and the Operating Agreement.

The Branch Leadership team, led by the Branch Director comprises:

1. Trustees appointed in accordance with the terms of the Constitution. The Trustees are responsible for the general administration for the Charity, its funding, property, and supporting the Director. The Trustees as at 31 March 2020 were:

Jane Franks	Branch Director and Chair of Trustees
Patti Dossett	Fundraising
Corey Herbertson	
Mark Klimt	
Jan Mares	
Tim Morrison	Treasurer
Biddie O'Connor	Secretary*

\*We would like to note our appreciation of Jenny Morrison's years of service as Secretary of the Branch Committee (2007-2013) and then as Secretary of the Board of Trustees from 2015 until she stood down in July 2019. Thank you!

2. Deputy Directors chosen by the Director with responsibility for operational matters. The Deputy Directors as at 31 March 2020 were:

Eddy 1069	Recruitment
John 907	Caller Support
Hazel 2422	Outreach
Kevin 497	IT Systems
Angela 2460	Training
Simon 1033	Leaders and Ongoing Training
Sue 1506	Volunteer Care

The Deputy Directors meet on a regular basis, and the Trustees meet at least four times per year as required by the Constitution.



## Financial Report

The financial position of South West Herts Samaritans remains robust. During the year, our total income was £46,156. This came from a wide range of sources – local authority grants, other grants, donations, bequests, and various forms of fundraising, in addition to Gift Aid on eligible donations and cash collections. Our income was 53% higher than the previous year, with individual donations, increased grants and two bequests accounting for most of the increase.

The other major contribution to resources, of course, is the time our volunteers generously give in running the charity, particularly in listening, Outreach and prison Listener support.

Expenditure was £38,969. The majority of the spend is on our primary listening activity including costs such as telephony, heat and power, business rates, volunteer travel costs and equipment maintenance. We have no paid staff. We also benefit greatly from owning our premises, Milly Apthorp House, thereby saving on rental costs.

The increase in income allowed us to tackle a number of urgent maintenance items, including renewing our fire alarm system, installing CCTV, and replacing the worn-out chairs in our operations room. We also expanded and renovated the car park, using our restricted property reserves.

The resulting net income for the year is £7,187. Given the Covid-19 crisis, the Trustees have resolved to donate this surplus to the central Samaritans fund set up to support other branches in financial difficulty.

We have healthy reserves. As of 31st March 2020, our unrestricted reserves were £74,445. This currently represents about 1.9 times our expenditure (our long term aim is 2.0). In addition to this, we have restricted reserves of £33,851, representing funds donated to

us for improvement of the property, and the revaluation reserve of £463,786, representing the value of Milly Apthorp House as improved by the car park expansion. Our financial reserves are held in short and long-term deposits with Lloyds Bank.

We will continue to play close attention both to maintaining careful cost control and to working with the community to raise the funds required for our core operation, for our Outreach and prison Listener work, and for attracting and training new listening volunteers.

A summary of the accounts is included in this Annual Report. Copies of the full Trustees' Report and Accounts approved by our Independent Examiner are available at the branch address.

Tim 1081

**Everyone is a volunteer – South West Herts  
Samaritans has no paid staff**

# Summarised Accounts 2019/20

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	All Funds £
<b>Statement of Financial Activities</b>			
<b>Income from:</b>			
Donations	11,364	-	11,364
Gift Aid donations	1,280	-	1,280
Collections	4,890	-	4,890
Tax recoverable on donations & collections	1,894	-	1,894
Fundraising events & sundry	5,097	-	5,097
Local Authority Grants & related income	6,000	-	6,000
Other grants	5,700	-	5,700
Income from prison training and support	911	-	911
Legacies	8,145	-	8,145
Interest and rounding	440	433	873
	<b>45,723</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>46,156</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>			
Raising Funds	3,101	-	3,101
Charitable Activities	35,868	-	35,868
	<b>38,969</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>38,969</b>
<b>Net income/(expenditure)</b>	<b>6,754</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>7,187</b>
<b>Balance Sheet at 31st March 2020</b>			
<b>Fixed assets</b> incl. property at 2017 valuation	<b>473,564</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>473,564</b>
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Debtors	3,342	-	3,342
Bank balances and cash	72,042	33,851	105,893
	<b>75,384</b>	<b>33,851</b>	<b>109,235</b>
<b>Current Liabilities</b> - creditors	10,717	-	10,717
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>538,231</b>	<b>33,851</b>	<b>572,082</b>
<b>The Funds of the Charity:</b>			
Restricted Income Funds	-	33,851	33,851
Unrestricted Funds	74,445	-	74,445
Revaluation Reserve	463,786	-	463,786
<b>Total Charity Funds</b>	<b>538,231</b>	<b>33,851</b>	<b>572,082</b>

# Sources of Funding

## Contributors in 2019/20 included:

St Albans Cathedral  
The Childwick Trust  
The Old Gits of Bar Bodega  
St Albans Fund for the Future  
Waitrose  
Watford Grammar School for Boys  
Abbots Langley Tough Ten Race  
Parkside Community Primary School  
Radlett Preparatory School  
The Rotary Club of Hemel Hempstead  
Kingsbury Barn  
Bushey & Oxhey Methodist Church  
Watford Grammar School for Girls  
Homewood Road United Reformed Church  
Donations in memory of David West  
Two private bequests

## Other major supporters included:

Hertfordshire County Council  
HMRC (Gift Aid)  
The National Offender Management Service  
Haberdashers' Aske's School for Girls

We would also like to thank the many individuals in the local community who give regularly or through our street and railway station collections, including:

The St Albans Market Christmas Collection  
The Matthew Lovell Memorial Match Collection  
Network Rail Station Collections

**We depend entirely on grants and donations from our generous supporters**

# Samaritans Vision, Mission and Values

**Our vision** is that fewer people die by suicide.

## Our mission

We make sure there's someone there for anyone who needs someone.

We give people ways to cope and the skills to be there for others.

We campaign to make suicide prevention a national and local priority.

## Our values

We have five core values. They are supported by these behaviours which we share with the Samaritans organisation: support, trust, aspiration and respect.

### **Listening**

Exploring feelings alleviates distress and helps people 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**

We believe that people have the right to find their own solution and that telling people what to do takes responsibility away from them.

### **Human contact**

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

**Every six seconds someone makes contact with the Samaritans**

# Interested in helping South West Herts Samaritans?

We'd love your help. Here are some ways you can help us to help others:

## Become a Samaritans listening volunteer

We welcome new listening and support volunteers. To find out more, call us on **01923 233614** or email us at **[swherts.recruitment@gmail.com](mailto:swherts.recruitment@gmail.com)**

## Raise awareness

To invite a speaker to your organisation, display a poster, or receive an article for your newsletter or publication please email us at **[swherts.outreach@gmail.com](mailto:swherts.outreach@gmail.com)**

If you would like to invite a speaker from our Outreach team to your school, contact us at **[swherts.schooltalks@gmail.com](mailto:swherts.schooltalks@gmail.com)**

## Support us financially

- Donate via our website **[www.samaritans.org/southwestherts](http://www.samaritans.org/southwestherts)**
- Donate on a regular basis through electronic payment, cash, or cheque. Our Treasurer can provide details for regular donations and how to claim Gift Aid to help your donation go even further. Message **[comm.swherts.sams@gmail.com](mailto:comm.swherts.sams@gmail.com)**
- Donate from a Charities Aid Foundation account online or by cheque.
- When shopping online, use [EasyFundraising.org.uk](http://EasyFundraising.org.uk) and Amazon Smile and select South West Herts Samaritans as your charity. If you are a member of the Co-op you can select our charity on your account page. View our website for more details on how to do this, **[www.samaritans.org/southwestherts](http://www.samaritans.org/southwestherts)**
- Leave a legacy to South West Herts Samaritans in your will - our Treasurer will be happy to discuss this further with you.
- Arrange a challenge on our behalf and raise funds for the branch (running, walking, baking trekking – there are so many opportunities) – email us at **[comm.swherts.sams@gmail.com](mailto:comm.swherts.sams@gmail.com)**

**Samaritans are available around the clock every single day of the year**

# Suicide Statistics

## Hertfordshire Statistics

The number of suicides in Hertfordshire recorded in 2018 by the Coroner was 95. According to the Hertfordshire Suicide Audit from the Hertfordshire Suicide Prevention Network:

- 76% were men.
- Men aged 30-49 years old made up the highest proportion of people dying by suicide, a slightly younger profile than nationally and the previous 2017 audit.
- Mental health issues were the most common risk factor mentioned in coroners' files.
- Over a quarter of people included in the audit were known to a mental health service at the time of death and had discussed mental health issues with a member of their GP practice in the four weeks leading up to their death.
- Over a third of people who died by suicide were known to have made a previous suicide attempt.
- Almost one in ten suicides took place on the railway, higher than nationally.
- Suicide is the leading cause of death for men under 50.

Each death by suicide impacts as many as 130 people. Hertfordshire has low suicide rates compared to regional and national rates – but each and every death is a tragedy.

The shared vision of the Hertfordshire Suicide Prevention Network is to make Hertfordshire a county where no one ever gets to a point where they feel suicide is their only option.

## Samaritans Statistics

Here are some key figures from the latest (December 2019) Samaritans report:

- In 2018, there were 6,859 suicides in the UK and Republic of Ireland; 6,507 suicides were registered in the UK and 352 in the Republic of Ireland.
- The highest suicide rate in the UK, and England, is among men aged 45-49.

Key trends:

- In 2018, there was a significant increase in suicide in the UK, the first time since 2013 – this appears to be driven by an increase in the male suicide rate.
- In the UK, suicide rates among young people have been increasing in recent years. The suicide rate for young females is now at its highest rate on record.
- In the UK men remain three times more likely to take their own lives than women.



Volunteers raising awareness of our services and providing support at Berkhamsted station.

Making good use of our new gazebo at Herts Pride!



# We're here to listen

Call free day or night on

## 116 123

Email

[jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

Web

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

Visit us

**Milly Apthorp House  
45 St John's Road  
Watford  
WD17 1QL**

## SAMARITANS

South West Herts Samaritans is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered in England and Wales (1170559). Our registered office is located at 45 St John's Road, Watford, Hertfordshire WD17 1QL.