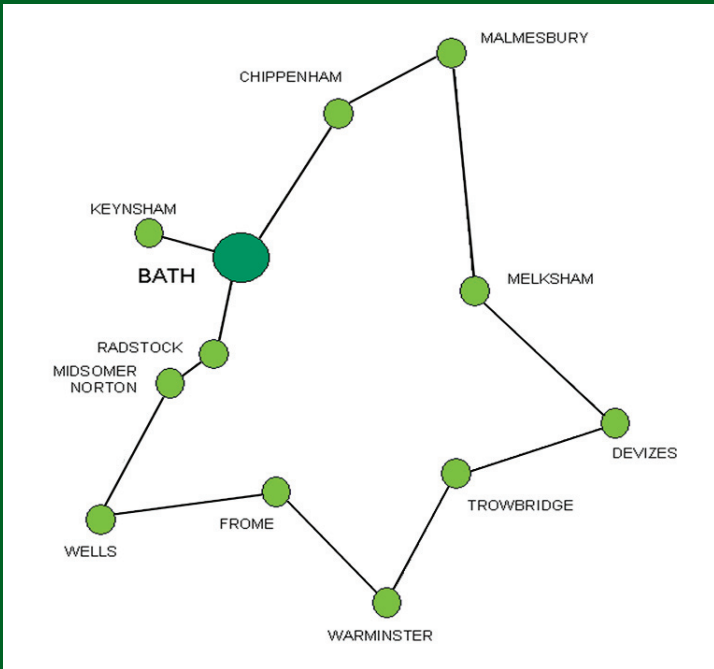


# **SAMARITANS**

## **Bath & District Branch Annual Report and Review 2006**



Area covered by Bath & District Samaritans

**10 Newbridge Hill, Bath BA1 3PU**

**01225 429222**

Registered Charity No. 247276

# Director's Report 2006

In her second, and regrettably last, report as Director, Ruth began by highlighting the changes that have taken place within Samaritans at a national level. Firstly the movement wide vote for a leaner and clearer form of Governance streamlining decision-making and branch representation, and secondly, the change to a 'daisy-chain' telephone system on our local line, which passes on Callers to another branch should we be engaged, ensuring that fewer Callers get the engaged tone. Also, two technological advances involve the setting up of our website, as well as a decision by Central Office to use electronic as opposed to postal mailing to the Branch. Lastly, the introduction of an open booths policy which states that, in order to ensure safety and welfare of both Callers and Volunteers, no calls should be taken from within closed rooms. To this end, a working party was set up to implement this policy within the Branch.

As for changes at the Centre itself, the make-up of the Friends has substantially changed, and Ruth acknowledged the invaluable effort put in by Philip and Dave. And with this complete change came the parallel change to enable the Friends to have equal status to Listening Samaritans by making them Support Samaritans.

More changes within the Branch saw the departure of Jill, the very efficient and enthusiastic Publicity Officer, as well as Tony, the able and most supportive Chairman of the Executive. They have been replaced by Sophie and Jonathan respectively, with Sophie getting off to a flying start by organising the Branch's part in the national 24/7 day when she arranged a very successful Garden Party, attended by the Mayor as well as a Bath Chronicle Reporter, a consequence of which was an interview on BBC Radio Bristol.

Ruth then underlined our work in the Prisons, now overseen by Carol and Kate who are continuing the sterling work done by Peter and Charles, whilst the Talks team carry our message into schools and other groups

In order to monitor the service the Centre gives to Callers, and to ensure that all the structures to achieve this are in place, the Branch receives a 'Visit' from two specially trained volunteers who have themselves been directors at some time. 47 pages of a Branch Profile were completed, a task made simpler by the ease of availability of much of the required information that had been set up by previous Directors, and Ruth gave thanks in this respect to Shirley, Peter and Carol.

# Chair's Report

Anyone tempted to serve as Chair on this Committee would do well to be spared its list of functions. When I agreed to take over in June last year, I knew little of the wide variety of obligations to be undertaken. But I needn't have worried, because I have had excellent support, not only from members of the committee, but from just about everyone from whom I have asked for help.

The upkeep of the Premises, Publicity, Fundraising, Finance, Health & Safety, and Social Events are the key functions and, in 2006, the first of these featured prominently as, in order to keep up with general Samaritan requirements, our listening facilities had to be radically altered. It was also incumbent on us to undergo a comprehensive redecoration of the most used rooms, under our remit to keep our building in a good state of repair.

So we got our heads together and between March and November, when work started, a working party was formed to draw up plans and specifications. Work started in mid November, and our intention to keep the phones hot was scuttled by health and safety issues, but we nonetheless opened a few days before Christmas, albeit in somewhat sparse conditions as carpets still had to be laid and a full layout of furniture reinstated.

The cost of these works has been high, but with such an efficient fundraising team as well as the sterling efforts of many outside this team, it hasn't been crippling. It includes updating our phone and computer systems, something that makes it all the easier for our Volunteers to provide the necessary and appropriate support to Callers who are now contacting us, not only by phone, but also by e-mail and, of course, calling on us at the Branch.

## Not forgetting our Treasurer

Penny Saunders continues as our Treasurer. Her commitment and output produces results that are all we could hope for, and more than we could expect. In her Report to the A.G.M. for the financial year to 31 July 2006, she described the year as a very satisfactory one, in which appeals, donations, collections and fundraising events brought in over £38,000. She pointed out that over 80% of this income is given to us by the general public.

In giving a big thank you to the Friends for their superb efforts and hard work, Penny expressed special thanks to the past Chair of the Friends, Dave Blumire, for

all he did in raising £7,000 through the Bath Half Marathon, and to our Volunteer Jacqueline, who put in so much time to persuade L & F Jones to choose the Samaritans as their Charity of the Year, which to date has raised nearly £10,000.

A list of donors was presented with the Report and Accounts at the A.G.M. Their contributions will help to meet the substantial cost of the refurbishment works at the Centre.

## The Friends & Publicity

Both Tony Ryan, the new Chair of the Friends, and Sophie in charge of Publicity have taken up their posts in the last year, and neither has let the grass grow under their feet. Five Supermarket collections, with an end-of-evening collection outside the Guildhall have yielded good results, also providing us with excellent publicity, whilst the usual work of Appeals to, and contacts with, local business firms, charitable trusts, local government and other organisations continues to be our life blood.

## Talks

A small group of Volunteers need no holding back in their task of offering talks on the activities of the Samaritan Organisation. They undertake about 20 visits a year to a variety of groups, associations and organisations, such as schools and colleges, W.I.s, Rotary Clubs, etc.

## Prisons

And so it is with prison visits, where two small teams of visitors travel, often weekly, to Leyhill Open Prison in Gloucestershire and Ashfield Young Offenders Prison/Institution.

During the twelve months to the end of December, we received a total of well over 12,000 calls, be they by phone, e-mail or face-to-face callers at the Centre. Significantly more than half are female callers and, bearing in mind that more than half of actual suicides are male, the assumption can be made that male callers are still more reluctant to talk to us.

Perhaps the first port of call leading from statistics is the issue of publicity. Whether the number of calls is rising or falling, we still have to do our best to ensure that we are letting as broad a cross-section of society know that we are there for them.

Then, our Centre has to offer Volunteers a comfortable and welcoming atmosphere in which the interests of all our Callers are served with the Organisation's Mission, Vision and Values in mind. This in turn demands a high level of Initial and on-Going Training, as well as a comprehensive support system, for all volunteers.

All this has to be financed, of course, relentlessly and constantly. And that's where the Friends of Bath & District Samaritans performs the unenviable task of raising the money that is so desperately needed to attain all our objectives.

We believe that we have all these requirements in place. They constantly need fine tuning and occasionally drastically updating or changing. For example, flip charts and blackboards still have a role to play in Initial and On-Going Training, but we have to move on to keep up, and that means the need for funds to provide such equipment as dvd players, projectors and screens.

**Jonathan**

**National number 08457 909090**

**24 hours a day**

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

# Can you help?

## As a listening Samaritan?

Our Branch has about 90 listening Volunteers, who give so much of their time. Their ages range from early-twenties to mid-eighties, and are a delightfully eclectic mix with a common wonderful purpose. Very many also help with a multitude of other duties needed to ensure its smooth running.

## As a support Samaritan?

If the role of Listening Volunteer isn't for you, then perhaps you feel you may be able to help with fundraising, or perhaps in an advisory capacity?

## As a corporate supporter?

Choosing Samaritans as your 'Charity of the Year', a financial donation, sponsorship, employee involvement.

**Your role, however small, will be a vital part in the running of our branch.**

Please contact us at 10 Newbridge Hill, Bath BA1 3PU, or by telephone 01225 429222, if you would like to be involved.

**"Samaritans are always empathetic,  
non-judgemental and supportive"**

## Samaritans' 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 that may lead to suicide.

## Samaritans' vision

Samaritans' vision is for a society in which:

- Fewer people die by suicide.
- People are able to explore their feelings.
- People are able to acknowledge and respect the feelings of others.

## Samaritans' 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.

## How do Samaritans help?

People contact Samaritans because of relationship problems, health worries, financial problems, loneliness, bereavement...the list is endless.

- Of the 5,000,000 contacts we received last year, only about 5% were from people seriously contemplating suicide.
- 13 million days are lost each year to stress in the UK
- More people are affected by depression than cancer
- Samaritans are contacted every seven seconds, by phone, by email, by text or by people coming into our branches.
- Last year our active volunteers gave 2,446,800, hours of their time to provide confidential emotional support.
- Samaritans received almost 135,000 emails in 2005
- Almost 64,000 face to face contacts took place in 2005, including over 5,000 seen by volunteers providing our service at music and other types of festivals.

