

# BANGOR AND NORTH DOWN SAMARITANS

## TRUSTEES' REPORT

for the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024

### COMPANY INFORMATION

#### 1. Reference and administration

##### Full name of Charity:

Bangor and North Down Samaritans. (CCNI 106780)

The Charity is an incorporated organisation (CLG NI 644431) and is

recognised by the Organisation as an affiliated branch of the Organisation. The Organisation Trustee Board shall have power to dissolve, suspend or withdraw recognition of the Charity as a branch of the Organisation.

##### Committee

The Committee of the Charity

##### Organisation:

The Company limited by guarantee called Bangor and North Down Samaritans is affiliated to the wider Samaritan Organisation which was incorporated under the Companies Act 1948 on 11 April 1963 and is a company limited by guarantee not having a share capital.

##### Company Registered office:

92 Dufferin Avenue, Bangor BT20 3AD

##### Charity address:

92 Dufferin Avenue, Bangor BT20 3AD

##### Trustees serving 2022/23:

Margaret Turner resigned 10<sup>th</sup> January 2024  
Irene Davidson resigned 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2023

Andrew McCartney

John Whitcroft  
Ursula Rankin

Heather Hamilton (Chair)

Nuala Meier

##### Treasurer/ Secretary

Nuala Meier

##### Custodian Trustees:

Samaritans  
The Upper Mill  
Kingsston Road  
Ewell, Surrey, KT17 2AF

##### Principal Banker:

Danske Bank  
Donegall Sq West  
Belfast BT1 6JS

##### Principal Solicitors:

Wilson & Nesbitt  
33 Hamilton Road  
Bangor BT20 4LF

##### Independent Examiners:

AAB Group Accountants Limited  
1-3 Arthur Street  
Belfast BT1 4GA

##### Insurance Brokers:

PIB Insurance Brokers  
Poptleton Grange  
Low Poptleton Lane  
York YO26 6GZ

# BANGOR AND NORTH DOWN SAMARITANS

## TRUSTEES' REPORT

for the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024

The Trustees hereby present their report and the unaudited financial statements for the period ended 31 March 2024

These documents are prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and, voluntarily, in accordance with international best practice (Statement of Recommended Practice in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102 effective 2019) as recommended by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland. The Trustees' Report contains the information required to be provided in the Trustee's Annual Report under the Statements of Recommended Practice guidelines.

### 1. Structure, Governance and Management

Bangor and North Down Samaritans (CLG NI 644431; CCNI 106780) is, and is recognised by the Organisation as an affiliated branch of the Organisation.

The Organisation called Samaritans was incorporated under the Companies Act 1948 on 11 April 1963 and is a company limited by guarantee, not having a share capital, registered in England and Wales with company number 757372, and a charity registered in England and Wales (charity registered number 219432) and in Scotland (Scottish charity number SC040604) ("the Central Charity").

The Organisation's Trustee Board shall have power to dissolve, suspend or withdraw recognition of the Charity as a branch of the Organisation.

**Bangor and North Down Samaritans (NI 644431; CCNI 106780)** was registered as a Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG) in March 2017 and is affiliated to the Central Samaritans of United Kingdom and Ireland (the Organisation)

### 2. Management, Internal Control and Risk Management

The day to day management of the Charity is the responsibility of the Trustees of the Charity who are responsible for the implementation of Samaritans strategy and to support the work of Samaritan volunteers in the Charity.

The Trustees have overall responsibility for the system of internal control for the charity including the safety of Charity assets and the integrity of the accounting procedures.

The Committee is comprised of:

- a) A minimum of three Trustees and a maximum of thirteen Trustees.
- b) The Branch Director is a Trustee.
- c) Trustees shall be elected as Treasurer and Secretary (these may be the same person).
- d) Up to eight additional Trustees may be appointed.
- e) Where necessary, there may be Trustees co-opted but this shall not exceed two in number.

At the AGM each year all Trustees except the Branch Director will stand down and fresh elections will take place.

In addition the Branch Director may appoint one of the Trustees as Vice Director.

The Committee shall meet as often as may be required but at least three times a year. Three members of the Committee shall be a quorum.

### 3. Public Benefit Statement

In planning our activities for the year Trustees have kept in mind the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit.

Samaritans offers support to those at risk of suicide by being there to listen and encourage the recognition and exploration of their options. By doing so we aim to help people find ways of coping with their distress without choosing to die by suicide. We also seek to support those whose distress is less acute, in the hope that they will not reach the point of feeling that they wish to end their lives.

#### **4. Objectives and Activities**

##### *4.1 Objectives*

Bangor and North Down Samaritans' main objects are:

- To provide confidential emotional support for people who are experiencing feelings of emotional distress or despair including those that may lead to suicide;
- To promote a better understanding in society of suicide, suicidal behaviour and the value of expressing feelings which may otherwise lead to suicide or impaired emotional health; and
- To support the Organisation, Samaritans, registered in England and Wales with company number 757372, registered charity number 219432.

##### *4.2 Principal Activities*

Bangor and North Down Samaritans' principal activities include the following:

- Providing confidential emotional support via telephone and on-line chat;
- Raising awareness and understanding of Samaritans;
- Developing partnerships with related agencies, voluntary groups and statutory bodies to better implement Samaritans strategic objectives and improve our service for 'callers';
- Supporting prisoners in prisons;
- Laising with statutory bodies on behalf of the charity; and
- Implementing the research policy and best practice standards generated by Samaritans.

#### **5. Vision, Mission and Values**

##### **Our Vision**

Our vision is that fewer people die by suicide.

##### **Our Mission**

Our mission is to make sure there's someone there for anyone who needs someone, to give people ways to cope and the skills to be there for others, and to campaign to make suicide prevention a national and local priority. Together we can make change that saves lives.

##### **Our Values**

Our support services adapt to the changing environment, but the values at the core of our listening service remain constant:

- **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.

## 6. Volunteers

The Bangor and North Down Samaritans Branch could not operate without the dedication, skill and commitment of its volunteers. We currently have 75 volunteers, all of whom fully recognise the importance of being available, and providing a safe place, where people can be themselves when they need us most.

We are committed to ensuring that all volunteers develop and maintain the necessary skills and knowledge, in order to provide the best service to those who contact us. We invest substantially in both initial training for new volunteers, and on-going continuous development for all volunteers, to facilitate the delivery of consistently high-quality, effective and safe services within the Branch. In addition, all new listening volunteers are required to clear Samaritans safeguarding procedures before commencing emotional support duties.

Our volunteers are ordinary people who do extraordinary things, and we could do nothing without them. We owe them an enormous debt of gratitude.

## 7. Helpline

Samaritans branches collectively operate a 24-hour, free telephone and email helpline service. In addition, the new Online Chat facility has continued to operate on a pilot basis, with its availability and opening hours having recently been extended to include Fridays. As a result, our Branch has now increased the provision of this service to two evenings per week (previously it was one).

Bangor and North Down Samaritans is one of the eight branches in Northern Ireland connected to the UK telephony network, *Link*. The *Link* system is a digital platform which ensures that callers are connected to the service as quickly as possible and that capacity can be monitored to ensure that the service offers optimal capacity. Samaritans is also signposted to by other service providers, and many other helplines, which are not in a position to offer a 24-hour service.

## 8. Awareness raising, outreach and face to face

Volunteers within the Bangor and North Down Samaritans Branch have continued to deliver an extensive range of awareness raising sessions in the community, during the year. These include the following:

- Delivery of Samaritans emotional awareness presentations in a number of schools in the Bangor and North Down area, including provision of information on mental health and wellbeing, and reaching out to over 1500 teenagers in the process;
- Engaging with commuters at Bangor Train and Bus Stations on Brew Monday, in conjunction with Translink;
- Providing talks on the role of Samaritans to various local community and mental health groups;
- Assisting at the Ards Cycling Club annual sportive;
- Provision of emotional support to young offenders and women prisoners in the Hydebank Wood, Young Offenders Centre and Prison, in conjunction with Belfast Branch;

- Assisting in the promotion and delivery of Samaritans Mental Health Awareness Training in the workplace; and
- Continuing to develop a relationship with North Down Community Network, Bangor, and Ards and North Down Borough Council, to improve our network of contacts and spread the Samaritans word.

The Branch has not yet been able to re-introduce the drop-in service at our premises whereby people can call into the Branch to avail of face-to-face emotional support. This is being kept under review, in line with guidance from Samaritans Central Office.

## **9. Achievements, performance and plans for the future**

In 1973, the Bangor and North Down Branch of Samaritans first opened its doors, at 92 Duffryn Avenue, Bangor. Over 50 years later, volunteers from the Branch have continued to provide emotional support to those members of the local and wider community, who are experiencing emotional distress or despair. To celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Branch, a number of events took place over the weekend of 22-24 September 2023, commencing with a reception at the City Hall, for all its current Samaritans volunteers, hosted by the Deputy Mayor for the Ards and North Down Borough Council, Councillor Hannah Irwin. The reception presented an opportunity for the Deputy Mayor, on behalf of the Council, to thank the current volunteers, and to acknowledge that without them, the Branch could do nothing.

Over the same weekend, the Branch hosted the prestigious annual Samaritans Ireland Conference, at the Old Inn, Crawfordsburn. Samaritans volunteers from all over the island of Ireland, together with a number of eminent professionals from a diverse arena of mental health and wellbeing backgrounds, were in attendance. The theme of the Conference was Building Resilience Together.

In the 12-month period to the end of March 2024, the Branch volunteers provided emotional support to 13,529 callers. There were 13,289 callers supported by telephone and 260 callers supported by Online Chat. All were provided with confidential, non-judgemental, emotional support, with our selfless volunteers giving up 2,877 hours of their time in the process.

The Branch Recruitment Team ran two campaigns to attract new volunteers, up to the end of March 2024. This resulted in 9 new Listening Volunteers being appointed. Currently a further 9 potential volunteers are undergoing training. Applications to join our Branch can now be made online through the Samaritans Website ([www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)).

Following the relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions, the Training Team continued with the revised format of initial training for new volunteers, involving a blend of both face-to-face tutoring and online training. Current volunteers are required to undergo 5 hours continuous development each year, with the emphasis, this year, being on making prison calls better, the role of the Branch Hub Liaison Officer and continuing to ensure self-care of all our volunteers. Ongoing training was also provided at various levels for those involved in managing the Branch, including for Day Leaders. We are grateful for the collective effort, resilience and dedication of all those volunteers who have helped in the roll-out of training across the Branch.

Fundraising is the cornerstone of our continued existence and we must thank the community in Bangor and North Down, for their continued support, financially and otherwise, particularly given the current cost of living crisis. Those volunteers who take on the extra duties in relation to fundraising are essential and much appreciated. We must also express our gratitude to those members of the community who help us in different ways with our fundraising, including ex volunteers and their friends and relatives, and a number of the local supermarket chains who allowed us to do collections on their premises. Donations were received from a variety of sources including Ards Cycling Club, St Galls, Groomsport Presbyterian Church, USA Holywood, Donaghadee Rotary, Grosvenor Choral Society, Bangor Golf Club and Carnalea Methodist Church. We were also in receipt of funds collected from attendees at the Sarah Milligan concert, in December 2023, Waterfront Hall Belfast, as part of her recent sell-out UK and Ireland tour. We are very grateful for the ongoing support given to the Samaritans organisation by Sarah Milligan, and for the welcome opportunity to collect funds, after her concert, directly for the Branch.

Members of the local community remember us in their wills and leave legacies for our continued work, and we are very grateful for the contributions received from them.

## 10. Financial Review

### 10.1 Results for the year

Financial results for the year ended 31 March 2024 are shown in the Statement of Financial Activities on page 10.

### 10.2 Income Generation

Bangor and North Down Samaritans raised total income of £43,527 in the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 (2023 – £27,903).

### 10.3 Resources Expended

Total resources expended by Bangor and North Down Samaritans amounted to £55,076 for the year to 31 March 2024 (2023 – £29,993). Of the Charity's expenditure 97% was spent on direct charitable activities and 3% on governance.

### 10.4 Reserve Policy

In accordance with recommended best practice, the Trustees have adopted a Reserves Policy which is concerned with how much 'free' (or unallocated) reserves the charity retains.

This excludes the following:

- Restricted funds
- Designated funds
- Income funds that could only be realised by disposing of fixed assets held for charity use.

Bangor and North Down Samaritans has the responsibility for establishing an appropriate Reserve Policy. Having reviewed the reserves of the charity, the policy of the Trustees is to retain sufficient reserves to ensure the continuity of operations and to absorb periodic setbacks, while committing the maximum amount available for the provision of services. The Trustees have agreed that the most appropriate level of reserves should be kept at the level representing 12-24 months expenditure. In light of the recent pandemic it was deemed prudent and appropriate to exceed this level of reserves in the short to medium term.

## 11. Statement of responsibilities of members of the Board in respect of the financial statements

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustee's Report and the financial statements in accordance with UK Law and regulation.

The Trustees have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice, including SORP Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK.

In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies for the Charity financial statements and then apply them consistently;
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether the financial statements have been prepared in accordance with applicable accounting standards, and identify those standards, and note the effect and the reasons for any material departure from those standards;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charity will continue in business.

**BANGOR AND NORTH DOWN SAMARITANS**

**TRUSTEES' REPORT**

*for the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024*

The Trustees are responsible for ensuring that the Charity keeps or causes to be kept adequate accounting records which correctly explain and record the transactions of the Charity, enable at any time the assets, liabilities, financial position and profit or loss of the Charity to be determined with reasonable accuracy and enable them to ensure that the financial statements and Directors' Report comply with legislation. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees:



Nuala Meier  
Trustee

Date: 3/9/24



Heather Hamilton  
Trustee

Date: 3/9/24