

# Samaritans Quarterly Report for Boston Big Local – March 2024

## Brew Monday

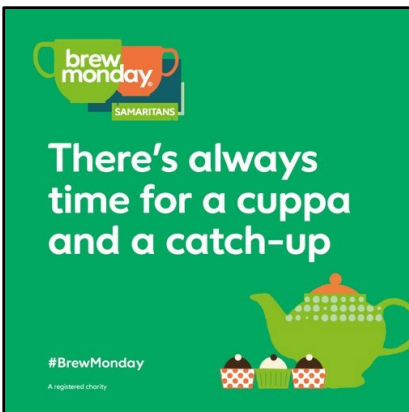
On 15th January, we were once again reminding people that ‘there’s always time for a cuppa and a catch-up’.

Brew Monday is a Samaritans' takeover of ‘Blue Monday’ – the third Monday in January, which is often dubbed ‘the most difficult day of the year’ (although there is no scientific evidence to back this up).

At Samaritans we know there is no such thing as ‘Blue Monday’ and that feeling low is not just reserved for Mondays or a random day in January. So, this year we were saying **out with the blue and in with the brew**

On Saturday January 13<sup>th</sup> we once again had a presence in Pescod Square to promote Bew Monday, chatting to shoppers and handing out teabags.





Brew Monday this year encouraged us to keep a local focus with business, work, community, and social venues, having the opportunity to hold awareness and/or fundraising events at cafes or other suitable places in our towns and cities.

## Volunteers

Several volunteers left the branch in the New Year for work and personal reasons, so regrettably we have had our active listening volunteer numbers drop to 19 over the last couple of months.

This has curtailed our outreach activity beyond keeping the phone lines open and we haven't been able to do a great deal in the community. A new cohort of 7 volunteers began their in-person training in the Voluntary Centre for 6 consecutive Saturdays from the end of January, but unfortunately, for one reason or another, only 4 made it to the duty room and begin their mentored shifts.

We have already begun interviewing prospective volunteers on the first Saturday of the month for our next training in September and this summer we will need to take every opportunity to push a recruitment drive.

## Outreach Training



Our new director Sarah took up her role on March 11<sup>th</sup> and has already had several enquiries about talks in the Boston area and invitations to events focusing on mental health and wellbeing.

Although we have not actively been engaged in outreach activity this quarter, Boston Samaritans is now very well established and well known within the local area. We are already working with Boston High school, Boston College, the Library, The Beach Event, Boston Bike night and the annual NHS Community event in September at the Princess Royal Stadium.

Beyond Boston, this summer we are again invited to the Heckington Show, RAF Coningsby Family Day and RAF Cranwell Mental Wellbeing Day. One of our volunteers has recently teamed up with Peterborough Samaritans to add to their support for the Listening Volunteers in North Sea Camp.

Our outreach activity has really flourished over the last 5 years since we were based in the Len Medlock Voluntary Centre, and we are well-established there as national charity.

## The impact of the BBL funding for us.....

The funding we have received has enabled expansion and exposure to the Samaritan service but more importantly given us as volunteers stability and credibility as a small local branch.

Being in the Voluntary Centre has not only given us operational security but also personal security as it provides a safe environment for our volunteers which is of paramount importance to us as we deliver our service out of office hours in the evenings and at weekends.

The overall purpose of the funding was to support the access to provision of health and wellbeing activities to benefit residents in the BBL area by promoting Samaritans through the delivery of events and sessions on mental wellbeing and emotional resilience to organisations, and groups, using prescribed Samaritan material.



Over the last 5 years the funding has helped our volunteers to –

- Deliver a professional service from our 3 duty rooms in the Len Medlock Voluntary Centre and benefit from the practical advantages of working within a managed property.
- Talk to 30,000 people on the phone seeking emotional support.
- Recruit, interview, provide initial training and mentoring together with on-going training for 70 volunteers, of whom 28 remain active within the branch.

- Enabled us to purchase Samaritans caller awareness branded materials, flyers, posters, for distribution and display across the Boston area to complement our social media presence.
- Deliver training in the workplace of local businesses, health providers, educational and social establishments.
- Provide items during Covid such as specific cleaning materials, visors, individual handsets so that our volunteers could continue to provide service together with some additional technical hardware so we could meet and train via Zoom.
- Capture the attention of football fans this season at Boston United with our pitch side caller awareness banner.
- Support additional awareness events to celebrate our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year in 2022 with £1,500 from the Community Fund. The highlight for us was an invitation from the mayor to receive a Civic Award for Charitable services in the community.



## Going forward .....

The aim from the start has always been to continue making a difference within the local community after the funding period.

The need for the Samaritan service has not diminished.

- **Every 10 seconds**, Samaritans answers a call for help.
- When people contact Samaritans for emotional support, they often mention several concerns. Some of the primary concerns raised related to **mental health or illness, family, isolation or loneliness** and **relationship problems**.
- Suicidal feelings were expressed in almost **1 in 4** calls for help that involved emotional support.
- Self-harm was discussed in around **1 in 15** calls for help that involved emotional support.
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The Charity has developed a small but dedicated fundraising team at central office who work closely with the regions providing information and guidance to all volunteers about funding opportunities. From ways to attract new supporters and keep everyone, from individual donors to local communities engaged. The Samaritans' intranet provides detailed and current guidance on Grant, Trust, and corporate partnership applications.

In addition, we will continue to seek support for funding and development projects from our local Group Development Officers at VCS and Lincolnshire CVS, where we have already had some successes. We now have a very good handle on our running costs and feel confident that we have access to good networks to continue our service.

## Thank you to Boston Big Local...

..... for providing that funding springboard in 2019 to help us really establish our service. Thank you too for your consistent backing in helping us raise our profile in the local area for the people of Boston and for giving us the financial confidence to continue to deliver our service to those in need of emotional support.

