



ALTON COUNSELLING SERVICE

ANNUAL REPORT and ACCOUNTS

2015-2016

Alton Counselling Service

For the financial year ended 31 March 2016

1. Trustees and their Advisers

Board of Trustees

Elizabeth Knight (Chair)
Councillor Graham Hill
Michael Hayward
Pam Jones

Community Adviser

Pam Bradford

Consultant Psychiatrist & Clinical Adviser

Dr Paul Warren

Independent Examiner

R.H.A. Chase, FCA

Management Board

Director

Head of Counselling

Dorothy Harte

Treasurer

Phil Cutts

Service Manager

Lissa Morris

Bankers

HSBC Bank,
Lansdowne House, 74 High Street,
Alton,
GU34 1EZ

Premises:

Quaker Meeting House,
Church Street,
Alton
GU34 2DA

Tel: 01420 89207

Web: www.altoncounselling.org.uk

Alton Counselling Service

For the financial year ended 31 March 2016

2. Structure, Governance and Management

Alton Counselling Service (ACS) was proud to celebrate its 40th anniversary during the year. ACS was established in 1974 as charity number 279857. The governing trust deed of 6 February 1980 was subsequently amended by a deed of variation dated 7 December 2010.

The Trustees are responsible for the governance of ACS. They are initially elected and thereafter confirmed in post annually. The Trustees help to reconcile competing demands faced by the charity. They work with the Management Board to set the strategic direction and major areas of work. The day-to-day management is delegated to the Management Board comprising the Director, the Head of Counselling, the Treasurer and the Service Manager. The Trustees are unpaid volunteers who may claim reasonable out-of-pocket expenses. No Trustee claimed any expenses during the year.

The Trustees meet four times a year and the Management Board meets ten times a year, more often if required. The Trustees have put in place a reserves policy and financial systems to reduce as far as possible financial risk. Professional indemnity and public liability insurances are maintained. The service operates to BACP guidelines to minimise clinical risk.

ACS provides high-quality counselling on a sliding scale of cost, so that no one is refused counselling for financial reasons. The service ensures confidentiality and a safe environment that gives clients the opportunity to talk through the difficulties they are encountering. These might include:

- feeling unhappy, lonely, anxious or depressed
- being in need of understanding or support
- finding it difficult to relate to others
- lacking self-confidence
- facing a personal crisis, such as bereavement or relationship break-down
- undergoing major changes, such as redundancy or retirement

Counsellors work on a voluntary basis, though experienced counsellors receive a modest payment in lieu of expenses. Each counsellor is part of a supervision group meeting weekly to review client work. Any unresolved or difficult issues are referred to the Counselling Co-ordinator, who may seek the advice of the Director, the Head of Counselling or the Consultant Psychiatrist & Clinical Adviser.

The Service relies on volunteers at all levels. In addition to the professionally trained counsellors, who give their time freely, the Director, the Treasurer, the Receptionists

Alton Counselling Service

For the financial year ended 31 March 2016

and others also work without payment. Everyone who works in ACS has a meeting at least once a year with the person to whom they are responsible, with the opportunity to express their views on the operation of ACS.

3. Objectives, Activities and Achievements

The charity's objectives as stated in the trust deed, as amended, are:

- To provide counselling to those seeking help for emotional and psychological difficulties in accordance with current best practice
- To research the theory and practice of counselling and to publish the result of this research where appropriate
- To offer training and development opportunities in counselling to qualified and trainee counsellors.

4. Review of Clinical Practice

The last twelve months has been a time of enormous change within the Service. Unfortunately Susan Forster, my predecessor, had to retire from her post after working hard and being very committed to the Service for four years. She was a strong guiding presence and will be remembered for many years.

Since I took over the role we have had to consider our future in the light of reduced client numbers. Based on this and some local research, we decided to expand into areas of couples counselling and young people's counselling in order to meet local needs. Couples counselling has now been running since February and young person's counselling will begin in July. To facilitate both these ventures we have run basic training courses which have been available to external counsellors and have been taken up enthusiastically. We are now looking at running further training in the next year. In the autumn there will be a skills course for anyone who can use it pastorally or in a working setting and we are planning further trainings in the spring.

Another new venture has been the Film Mornings which run four times a year and provide a discussion forum for internal and external counsellors to explore their work via the medium of a current film.

Whilst all this has been happening, the core work of the Service has continued and client numbers are gradually rising again. Over this period we have had to say goodbye to a number of counsellors (Lynn Gibson, Marion Downey, Annabel James and Linda Morison) and have reduced the number of supervisors for a while. We are now gradually increasing this again as we welcome new counsellors. So, we look forward to another year of further developments.

Alton Counselling Service

For the financial year ended 31 March 2016

5. Treasurer's Report

Financial Review

The end of year accounts show a deficit of £7,993 against a budget forecast of a deficit of £7,376, showing a negative variance of £616. This was a remarkable result, considering that revenues from clients had declined even more dramatically than we had feared at the start of the year, when projecting the budgeted loss. Over the year, client revenues were £19,745 below budget, hitting the lowest point in March 2015. By then, initial consultations had picked up, followed by an increase in client numbers and revenue.

The critical shortfall in client revenue was offset in 2 major ways:

- a. Operating expenses were reduced through careful management and through the reduction in client activity (saving of £12,179 over budget) and
- b. The provision of training courses, in particular for external candidates, brought much-needed additional revenue (£7,570)

HMRC/PAYE

Throughout the year we have been using the HMRC supplied RTI software to manage our payroll and NIC payments. This has been trouble-free and has ensured that we meet our obligations to HMRC in a timely manner.

Credit Card System

The Cardsave virtual terminal credit card system continues to meet our credit card processing needs. In November 2014 we renewed compliance to the Payment Card Industries Digital Security Standards as required by Cardsave.

Reserve Account

Reserve funds are held in a Charity Deposit Account with Virgin Money, currently paying 1.0% interest.

The charity makes no specific investments.

6. Director's Report

ACS performance through a difficult year

It was clear at the end of last year that the Service would face an extremely demanding time in 2014-15. The impact of IAPT, a free form of therapy available through NHS, was already obvious as new enquiries withered, but we knew from shared experience with

Alton Counselling Service

For the financial year ended 31 March 2016

other members of the National Counselling Network (NCN) that this would only last for 6-18 months provided that we took the right steps. These steps can be summarised as invest in marketing, diversify the types of counselling offered, use training as a means to bolster income and manage the size of the Service and thus its costs.

In preparation, ACS formed a Marketing Working Group led by Trustees and this group, with a limited and restricted budget, ran a programme to raise the profile of ACS amongst health providers, the local community and the public at large.

Our new Head of Counselling initiated programmes to introduce couples therapy, counselling for young people, and expanded the number of training courses and CPD events, valuably diversifying the Service's revenue streams outside client work.

At the same time, our overheads were reduced through careful management of supervision, administration and generally to reflect the demands of a smaller service.

These initiatives have allowed ACS to overcome the introduction of IAPT, and look forward to achieving recovery within a similar time frame to that suggested by NCN members who have been through the same process earlier.

We are extremely grateful to everyone involved in ACS for the loyalty and commitment to the Service's longevity that has been shown throughout a very difficult year.

Fundraising

There were no major fundraising events organised during the year, but very important help was received from Alton Town Council and East Hampshire District Council, both of whom gave grants of £1,000 to help with training and preparing for the launch of counselling for young people aged 16 – 18. The continued support of councils of the outlying parishes has also been very helpful.

Networks

The National Counselling Network (NCN) has provided experienced advice and has become a centre for sharing information that saves members the time and expense that might otherwise be involved in developing their practices in isolation.

Accreditation

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP).

Our five yearly full review was submitted in March 2015. As BACP has a large backlog of reviews pending, they have advised us not to expect any reaction until the autumn but in the meantime are permitted to show our existing accreditation.

British Psychoanalytic Council (BPC)

BPC has not been able to develop its own framework to create a successor of the WPF Network, and thus has not yet produced a set of clinical standards that might be tailored for counselling services. It is unclear when this framework might be expected.

Alton Counselling Service

For the financial year ended 31 March 2016

For the time being, ACS remains able to put forward counsellors for entry to the BPC Register.

7. Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The Trustees are required to prepare an annual report and financial statements for each financial year. These statements should give a true and fair view of the charity's financial activities during the year and its financial position at the end of the year. In preparing these financial statements the Trustees have:

- selected suitable accounting policies and then applied them consistently
- made judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- taken responsibility for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Elizabeth Knight, Chair of Trustees

Alton Counselling Service

For the financial year ended 31 March 2016

Clinical Organization

Head of Counselling

Dorothy Harte

Counselling Coordinator

Ann Vodden

Clinical Supervisors

Moya Chase

Thea de Moel

Stanley Roman

Ann Vodden

Consultant Psychiatrist & Clinical Adviser

Dr Paul Warren

Counsellors

The following counsellors have made themselves available to ACS during the year:

Karen Allington

Paul Brand

Paul Cawkill

Sue Cutts

Jackie Downey

Marion Downey

Lynn Gibson

Jeremy Hughes

Annabel James

Alison Lee

Dillian Maas

Linda Morison

Charity Moss

Tim Wenmouth

Kim Williams

Volunteers

The following have volunteered their time to ACS

Anne Johnston

Neil Kearns

Victoria Lees

Charlie Patterson

Sara Thompson

Alton Counselling Service
For the financial year ended 31 March 2016



**ALTON COUNSELLING
SERVICE**

**Accounts for the
financial year ended**

31 March 2015

Alton Counselling Service

For the financial year ended 31 March 2016

Receipts and Payments Accounts

	Total Funds		Notes (1)
	Last Year £	This Year	
<u>Receipts</u>			
Counselling and Training	37,109	21,637	
Training Courses	0	7,570	
Grants and Donations	2,978	1,770	(2)
Bank Interest	479	420	
Fund-raising events	5,421	540	(3)
Conference	1,195	1,150	
Bad debt	(200)	(90)	
Total Receipts	£46,982	£32,997	
<u>Payments</u>			
Counselling and Training	(23,495)	(17,281)	
Training Courses		(600)	
Bursary Payments		(514)	
Administration	(14,937)	(15,731)	
Premises Costs	(5,335)	(5,375)	
Insurance and Affiliation Fees	(508)	(826)	
Fund-raising events	(698)	0	
Conference	(1,117)	(662)	
Total Payments	£(46,090)	£(40,990)	
Net of Receipts/(Payments)	892	(7,993)	
Cash Funds last year end	27,966	28,858	
Cash Funds this year end	£28,858	£20,865	

Statement of Assets and Liabilities at Year End

	Unrestricted Funds £
<u>Cash Funds</u>	
Petty cash	30
Current account: HSBC bank	2,237
Charity Deposit Account: Virgin Money	18,598
Total Cash Funds	£20,865

Signed on behalf of all the trustees.....

Elizabeth Knight, Chair of Trustees

Alton Counselling Service

For the financial year ended 31 March 2016

Notes to the accounts

1. Restricted Funds

The Service currently has no restricted funds.

2. Grants and donations

During the year, donations were received from the following:

	<u>£</u>
Alton Beer Festival	300
Binsted Parish Council	200
Alison Raeburn	20
Worldham Parish Council	50
Jeremy Hughes	200
EHDC - Donation in contribution to Printer & AV Refresh	1,000

TOTAL

£1,770

3. Fund-raising events

During the year, receipts from Fund-raising events were as follows:

	<u>£</u>
Rosemary Russell's Recital (including Gift Aid receipts)	540
TOTAL	<u>£540</u>

Alton Counselling Service

For the financial year ended 31 March 2016

Independent Examiner's Report on the Accounts

I report on the accounts of Alton Counselling Service for the year ended 31 March 2015, which are set out on pages 11 to 12.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met; or
- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

R.H.A. Chase, FCA
Garden Cottage
The Street
Upper Farringdon
Alton, Hampshire
GU34 3DT

Charity Commission registered number: 279857