



ALTON COUNSELLING SERVICE

**ANNUAL REPORT
and
ACCOUNTS**

2010-2011

Alton Counselling Service
Report of the Board of Trustees for the period 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011

1. Trustees and their Advisers

Board of Trustees

Diana Faithfull (Chair)
Elizabeth Knight
Sue Malone
Judith Wilcox to March 2011
Anthea Denning
Sue Cutts from December 2010

Clinical Adviser

Rosemary Russell

Consultant Psychiatrist

Dr Paul Warren

Independent Examiner

Nigel Bulpitt FCA

Management Board

Director	Charles Bailey
Head of Counselling	Susan Forster
Treasurer	Phil Elliott
Service Administrator	Jenny Manville to December 2010 Nickie Foskett from December 2010

Bankers

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

Contact Details:

Quaker Meeting House,
39 Church Street,
Alton
GU34 2DA

Tel: 01420 89207

Web: altoncounselling.org.uk

Charity Commission registered number: 279857

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2. Structure, Governance and Management

The Alton Counselling Service was established in 1974, charity number 279857 and its governing document is the trust deed dated 6 February 1980, as amended by a Deed of Variation dated 7 December 2010.

Alton Counselling Service (ACS) aims to provide high quality counselling, for an individually negotiated donation, which ensures nobody is refused counselling for financial reasons. We provide a safe environment and an assurance of confidentiality which gives clients the opportunity to talk through and reflect upon difficulties which we can all experience from time to time in life. These include:

- feeling unhappy, lonely, anxious or depressed
- feeling 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-up
- undergoing major changes in life such as redundancy or retirement

The trustees of ACS are normally elected for three years and may stand for re-election at the end of that period. The trustees are all unpaid volunteers and may claim reasonable out of pocket expenses. No trustees claimed any expenses during the period of the report.

The trustees are responsible for the governance of ACS. They set the strategic direction for the charity and its major areas of work and help resolve competing demands which may be placed on the organisation. The Board of Trustees normally holds four meetings a year. The day to day management of the charity is delegated to the Management Board which is made up of the Director, the Head of Counselling, the Treasurer and the Service Administrator. The Management Board meets ten times a year or more often if required.

The trustees have put in place a reserves policy and financial systems to reduce as far as possible any financial risk. Clinically the service works to WPF and BACP guidelines with a view to minimising any risk in our work. In addition, clinical advisers are in place as and when required. Professional indemnity and public liability insurances are maintained.

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Counsellors work on a voluntary basis, though experienced counsellors may be entitled to a modest payment. Each counsellor is part of a supervision group comprising of a supervisor and up to five counsellors. Each supervision group meets on a weekly basis to review client work. Any unresolved or difficult issues will be referred to the Counselling Co-ordinator who may seek the advice of the Director, the Head of Counselling, the Clinical Adviser or the Consultant Psychiatrist.

The Head of Counselling holds meetings three times a year with the counsellors and with the receptionists who support the Service Administrator.

All people working in the service, on both the clinical and administrative sides, have a meeting at least once a year with the person to whom they are responsible, where they have the opportunity to express their views on the activities of the service and its operations.

ACS could not function without the work of volunteers at all levels in the organisation. In particular the counsellors, who are all professionally trained, give their time freely. Others such as the director, the treasurer and receptionists also work without payment.

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3. Objectives, Activities and Achievements

The charity's governing document is a trust deed dated 6 February 1980 as amended by a Deed of Variation dated 7 December 2010. The charity's objects as stated therein are:

- (a) To provide counselling to persons seeking help for emotional and psychological difficulties in accordance with current best practice; a clinical psychotherapeutic advisor and a consultant psychiatrist to provide advice to the Trust in the furtherance of its aims
- (b) To research the theory and practice of counselling and to publish the result of this research where appropriate
- (c) To offer training and development opportunities in counselling to qualified and trainee counsellors.

Over the past year ACS has devoted time to initiatives to strengthen the organisation, identified in the 2010 – 2013 business plan. The focus has been to make the service more accessible for clients, through reducing and making more predictable the time between first contact and commencement of weekly therapy sessions, and by widening our contact with the community.

Our objectives of this new business plan for the year ended have been to continue to provide high quality affordable counselling for the people of the Alton area and to:

1. Reduce reserves to the equivalent of 12 months operating costs required under the current Reserves Policy by investing in more modern office systems, additional training, and recruitment advertising.
2. Introduce a remuneration system for experienced counsellors as a means of encouraging them to stay with the Service.
3. Switch to electronic banking and introduce a card payment service for clients in anticipation of the withdrawal of the use of cheques.
4. Investigate the availability of alternative larger premises

Each of these objectives was attained, with the exception of the introduction of card payment because the service provider lost our application. The search for suitable alternative premises has not been encouraging, but by expanding our agreement at the Quaker Meeting House, and by managing use across the whole week, it is expected that no move will be needed for a further twelve months. The search thus continues.

We are proud of our willingness to support up to 50% of the cost of further training our course which members of our Service would like to undertake.

We are sorry to lose one Trustee, Judith Wilcox, who has had to resign due to work and family commitments. We are grateful to her for her valuable input

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during the time she was with us. It is good to welcome Sue Cutts to our Board of Trustees. Sue has had wide experience as a voluntary counsellor and having quite recently moved to this area, she is keen to be involved with the Service.

We feel it is beneficial to all those involved in the Service that a sense of cohesion is maintained and to this end we held a Christmas party at a Trustee's house and all contributed to the excellent food for the evening. It was a good atmosphere and an occasion we hope to repeat this year.

Another initiative towards this end is a Summer Conference which will be held following the AGM in June and to which we hope for a good attendance from local practitioners and interested parties. A report on this will be included next year.

It has been an exciting and innovative year for the Service and the current year promises to continue in this vein in pursuance of the aims of the business plan and the benefit of the local community. The Trustees have confidence that the increased expenditure is an investment for the future success of the Service.

Sincere thanks are due to the Counsellors, Supervisors, and Advisors who carry out the very essence of the Service. They are a very committed group and we are very appreciative of the amount of time they give on a voluntary basis. During any year there are some changes in the counsellor groups and it is appreciated that these are managed with as little disruption as possible when they occur.

We are extremely grateful for the dedication of the Management Committee in their thoughtful work and the time given often over and above the agreed hours. Thanks are due to Jenny Manville for the five years of service she gave to Alton Counselling as Administrator for which we are most grateful.

Nickie Foskett is very welcome and has made a cheerful and effective beginning to her employment with us.

Thank you, too, to the receptionists who very loyally come and give their time to cover the office so that the telephone is manned as much as possible.

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4. Review of Clinical Practice

The past year has been a period of immense change. As often happens when a senior central figure leaves an organisation, several experienced counsellors decided to leave ACS shortly after Jane Johnson, who had been Counselling Co-ordinator for ten years, announced her resignation. We had a number of excellent applications for trainee placements over the following months, many of whom we accepted, and our numbers began to improve. However it was a concern that the number of trainees now exceeded the number of experienced counsellors and we needed to redress this imbalance.

As part of the business plan we introduced a modest level of remuneration to counsellors with 200 hours of post qualification experience. This is particularly attractive to counsellors working towards their BACP accreditation. It also enabled us to attract three experienced counsellors who joined us in December and January. We understand that the good response has been primarily motivated by the opportunity to broaden and deepen experience of psychodynamic counselling in a service with a good reputation rather than the possibility of financial gain. However, we believe it is important to recognise the commitment shown by counsellors who work very hard to achieve their qualifications and who give many hours of their time voluntarily to support organisations such as ACS. We hope that our trainees on placement will continue at ACS after qualifying and in due course benefit from this scheme.

For several months, owing to the departure of our experienced counsellors, we were left with only one intake worker. Many thanks are due to Corinne Alford who carried this burden for some time until we were able to send two of our new counsellors on an Intake Training course. We would also like to express our appreciation to Basingstoke Counselling who assisted us with intakes during January. We now have three Intake workers and as a result we are able to offer Intake appointments very quickly.

The changes to the team continued throughout the year: Jenny Manville, who had been our administrator for five years, left at Christmas time; Demetra Onoufriou, supervisor, leaves at the end of May and Gay Stanning, supervisor, will be leaving at the end of June. They have worked at ACS for 4 and 6 years respectively and their departure will be a great loss. Corinne Alford, counsellor, will also be leaving us at the end of June after 10 years committed service at ACS.

Throughout this period of change everyone has worked very hard to maintain the consistency and quality of the work we do. Thanks are due to Nickie Foskett, who has quickly made her mark as our new administrator, and to Moya Chase who has taken on the role of Counselling Co-ordinator.

Going forward into 2011-2012 we are very pleased to welcome three more experienced counsellors to join ACS. We have also been in discussion with the student counselling service at Alton College with a view to running parallel placements for some trainees, thereby broadening the age range of the client

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base for the trainees at Alton College and also opening up the possibility for our counsellors to work with a younger age group.

We have been very fortunate that excellent supervisors, all with experience of working within the WPF network, have come forward to replace those who are leaving. In addition the volume of referrals coming through has increased to the extent that we have been able to start a fourth supervision group, with effect from the beginning of June.

Overall, although the pace of change has been so great, it has been a very positive if sometimes difficult year and ACS seems to be making healthy progress.

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5. Financial Review

Looking at the accounts in isolation, the Service appears to have turned a healthy surplus of over £5,000 last year into an unhealthy deficit of a similar figure for this. The reality is that we have been able, through the assistance of the grant of £5,000 received last year from the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Community Foundation, to undertake a review of our day-to-day workings and to significantly enhance our administration to provide a greater service to our clients, the fruits of which will be more apparent in next year's results.

Client donations continue to be our principle source of funding yielding £19,537 for the year, a fall of almost 13% from the previous year. The Service, however, has seen a significant increase in client contributions during the latter part of the current financial year which we anticipate will continue in to the future.

Our administrative costs increased by £4,100 during the year, primarily in personnel costs but including £600 for the cost of scanning archive files to free up office space.

As part of our fund-raising efforts, we committed £1,050 to secure three places for volunteer entrants to raise sponsorship for the Service at the London Marathon. Because of the timing of the event our return to date of £250 has formed only a small part of our overall fund-raising of £1,645, however, we anticipate a significant additional benefit to our results next year, when the balance of sponsorship monies are received; it is expected that the net contribution will be in excess of £2,500.

In November 2010, we were favoured with a grant of £500 from Alton Town Council. Their fiscal policy means that the grant is payable in the subsequent April.

With operating costs of £27,000 during the year exceeding year end reserves of £21,700, we are in breach of our current reserves policy which expects reserve retention to equate to 12 months operating costs. However given the fund raising commitments from the Marathon and Alton Town Council, and discounting the one-off cost of scanning the archive, this is considered an acceptable deviation from policy given the robust absolute amount of reserves. The Trustees will continue to monitor the reserves position closely.

The charity makes no specific investments.

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6. Director's Report

In normal circumstances, it would cause great concern to see receipts down by more than 25%, counselling and training costs up by 14%, and administrative costs up by 45%. But these weaker statistics were in line with predictions and hide the early signs of a turnaround of the affairs of our service. By the end of March 2011, ACS has 50% more clients than last year, and the average client contribution has increased by a third. A year ago, our waiting list for intake interviews was closed; today, our main focus is on adding a supervision group so that clients may move rapidly from intake into regular weekly sessions. We are beginning to offer potential clients a quicker and more predictable service, which is the main aim of the current 2010 – 2013 Business Plan.

We have recognised the actual number of hours put in by our paid staff. This has led to the increase in administrative costs, and is a matter which will have to stay under review as the service grows.

By careful management of the diary and by extending our contract at the Quaker Meeting House, it has been possible to increase the number of client sessions held in a week so that present levels can be accommodated under the one roof. However, the search for suitable additional rooms has yet to prove fruitful, and it may still be necessary to move to totally new premises if somewhere can be found which meets our needs and is affordable. The search will continue, as space could become a bottleneck in the process of getting new clients into regular sessions.

During the past year, many of our archive records were transferred to computer. The aim is to avoid building up large files of hard copy and thereby make the maximum use of the limited office space. To help prepare for the withdrawal of cheques, we have switched to electronic banking and intend to introduce shortly a facility so that clients may pay by card. The service is registered with the Information Commissioners Office under the Data protection Act.

New avenues of fundraising have been opened to help support our activities. Alton Town Council agreed a contribution of £500, which we hope to see repeated in future years so that the Town matches proportionately the regular donations made by the outlying parishes. We had three runners in the London Marathon, who have raised a further £2,500. These two sums are not reflected in the year end accounts.

An application has been submitted to HMRC for Gift Aid registration. While most donations come from sources which do not qualify for Gift Aid, registration will allow us to claim when the donor is eligible or should the profile of our donors change.

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Alton Beer Festival continues to be a stalwart supporter, as do the outlying parishes around Alton. Full details of donations made in the year are contained in the notes to accounts.

It is in the coming year that we expect the service to realise the real benefits of the investments made in 2010-11. We are confident that we can see a further 50% rise in the number of people to whom we make counselling available. It was the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Community Foundation that provided the seed money for this investment, and special thanks are due to them.

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:

Diana Faithfull, Chair of Trustees

18 June 2011

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Clinical Organization

Head of Counselling

Susan Forster

Counselling Coordinator

Moya Chase

Clinical Supervisors

Gay Stanning

Demetra Onoufriou

Moya Chase

Counsellors

Asma Mair

Carrie Black

Christine Wells (from Jan 11)

Corinne Alford

Gill Cassidy (from May 11)

Jean Satterthwaite

Jeremy Hughes (from Jan 11)

Lynn Gibson

Mandy Girdler (from May 11)

Nikki Cotterill

Paul Cawkill (from Jan 11)

Rita Harvey (to Feb 10)

Rachael Cann (to April 10)

Service Administrator

Jenny Manville (to Dec 10)

Nickie Foskett (from Dec 10)

Receptionists

Anabelle Taylor (from Mar 11)

Neil Kearns

Diane Worthington



ALTON COUNSELLING SERVICE

Accounts for the financial year ended

31 March 2011

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Alton Counselling Service

For the financial year ended 31 March 2011

Receipts and Payments Accounts

	Unrestricted Funds		Restricted Funds		Total Funds		Notes
	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Receipts							
Counselling and Training	22,384	19,537	-	-	22,384	19,537	
Grants and Donations	6,139	1,645	-	-	6,139	1,645	(1)
Bank Interest	145	154	-	-	145	154	
Sundry	11	-	-	-	11	-	
Total receipts	28,679	21,336	-	-	28,679	21,336	
Payments							
Counselling & Training	(10,405)	(11,859)	-	-	(10,405)	(11,859)	
Administration	(6,748)	(9,924)	-	-	(6,748)	(9,924)	
Premises Costs	(2,980)	(2,905)	-	-	(2,980)	(2,905)	
Insurance & Affiliation Fees	(962)	(1,284)	-	-	(962)	(1,284)	
London Marathon Entry	-	(1,050)	-	-	-	(1,050)	
Awards for All Project	-	-	(2,026)	-	(2,026)	-	
Total Payments	(21,095)	(27,022)	(2,026)	-	(23,121)	(27,022)	
Net of Receipts/(Payments)	7,584	(5,686)	(2,026)	-	5,558	(5,686)	
Cash Funds last year end	19,840	27,424	2,026	-	21,866	27,424	
Cash Funds this year end	27,424	21,738	-	-	27,424	21,738	

Statement of Assets and Liabilities at Year End

	Unrestricted Funds £
Cash Funds	
Petty cash	30
Current account: HSBC bank	2,708
Savings account: Newbury Building Society	19,000
Total Cash Funds	21,738

Signed on behalf of all the trustees

Diana Faithfull, Chair of Trustees

18 June 2011

Alton Counselling Service

For the financial year ended 31 March 2011

Notes to the accounts

1. Grants and donations

During the year, donations were received from the following:

	£
Little Green Dragon Bookshop	129
Alton Beer Festival	500
Worldham PC	50
Selborne PC	100
Medstead PC	150
Four Marks PC	50
Froyle PC	200
Bentworth PC	50
London Marathon Sponsorship	250
Binsted PC	116
Wield PC	50
	<hr/>
	1645

Alton Counselling Service

For the financial year ended 31 March 2011

Independent Examiner's Report on the Accounts

I report on the accounts of Alton Counselling Service for the year ended 31 March 2011, which are set out on pages 2 to 3.

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 43(2) of the Charities Act 1993 (the 1993 Act)) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 43 of the 1993 Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commissioners (under section 43(7)(b) of the 1993 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 41 of the 1993 Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 1993 Acthave 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.

Nigel Bulpitt FCA
The Old School
Upper Froyle
Alton
Hampshire
GU34 4LB

18 June 2011

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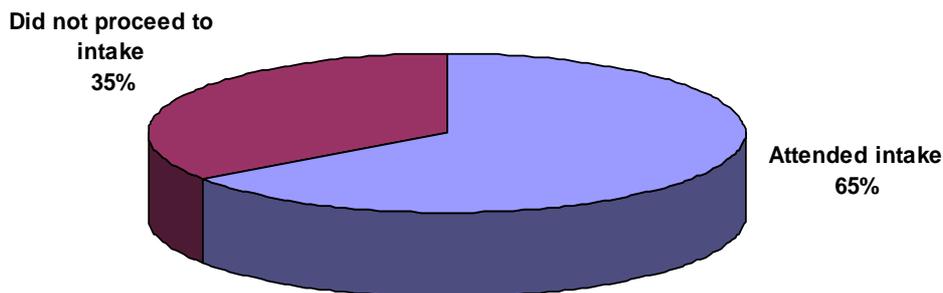
Alton Counselling Service

For the financial year ended 31 March 2011

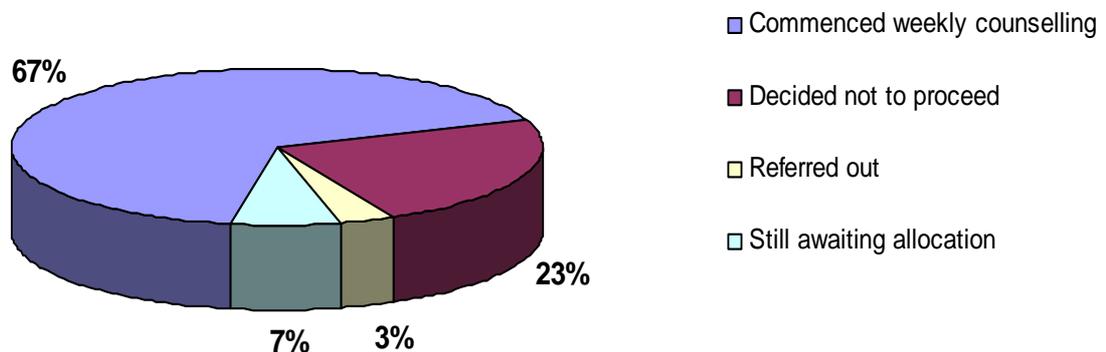
Appendix

Statistical Analysis April 2010 – March 2011

Ratio of enquiries to intakes
April 2010 - March 2011



Intake Outcome Analysis
(60 completed intakes March 2010 - April 2011)

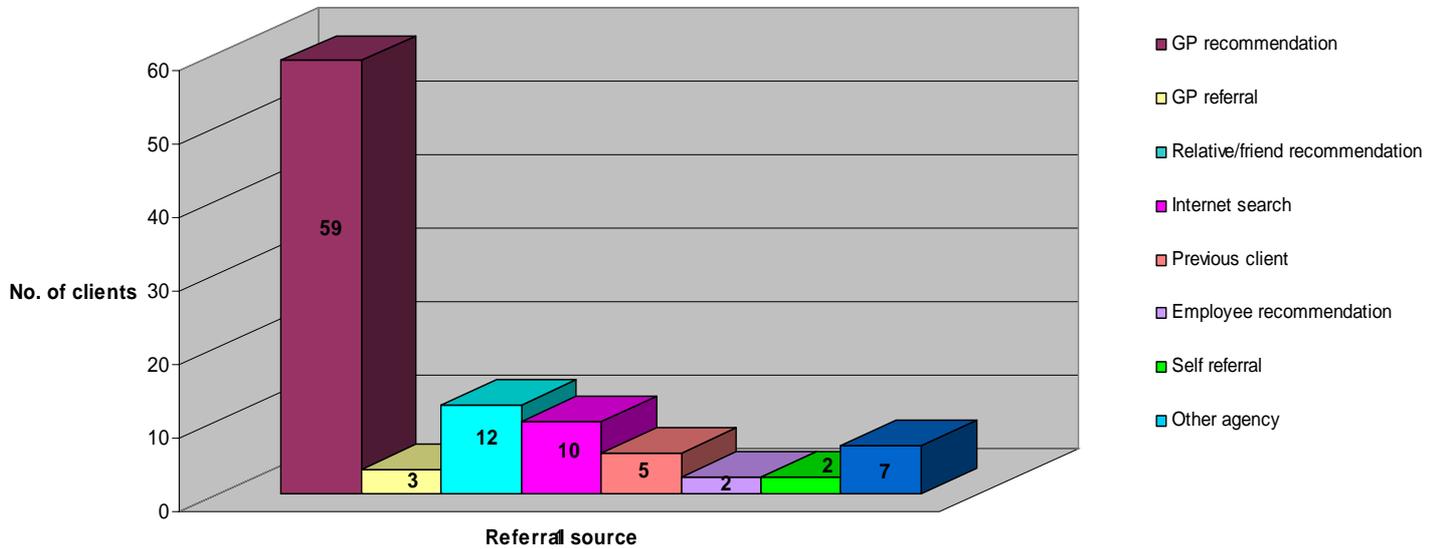


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For the financial year ended 31 March 2011

Analysis of Client Sources
April 2010 - March 2011



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