



# Counselling Together

## Annual Report:

1<sup>st</sup> January 2024 – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024

Charity number: 1108406

Registered address: c/o Admin Office, Christchurch Baptist Church,  
1A Beaconsfield Road, Christchurch BH23 1QT



# Reference & Administration Details

Charity Name: Counselling Together

Registered Charity no.: 1108406

Charity's address: c/o Admin Office, Christchurch Baptist Church,  
1A Beaconsfield Road, Christchurch, BH23 1QT

## Trustees

Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity:

Trustee name	Office	Dates acted if not for whole year
Mr Peter Parslow	Chair	Whole year
Mrs Frances Daniel	Trustee	Whole year
Mrs Margaret Boyce	Trustee	Whole year

## Management Team

Sue Ingram - Counselling Manager

Alan Boyce – Administration Manager

Loraine Chirgwin – Bookkeeper until 15 October 2024

Phil Cole – Bookkeeper from 15 October 2024

# Structure, governance & management

## Type of governing document:

Trust Deed, declared 8/12/2004

Supplemental Deed to adjust objects – 5/2/2005

Supplemental Deed for a change of name - 25/6/2011

Supplemental Deed to adjust objects – 16/5/2023

## How the charity is constituted: Charitable Trust

**Trustee selection methods:** Appointed by the Trustees in place, following a selection process including an application form, taking references and DBS check. Recommendations for new Trustees are requested from Church leaders that support the Charity.

## Counselling Together - Organisational structure:

The charity operates independently and does not work directly with other groups or networks. As a Christian charity it is affiliated with the Association of Christians in Counselling and Linked Professions’.

Counselling Together works closely with Churches in the New Forest, Christchurch and surrounding areas; some provide the free use of counselling rooms and some contribute to the bursary fund for clients with financial needs.

A review of the Policies and Procedures is regularly undertaken to keep them in line with changing standards e.g. GDPR, Safeguarding etc.

The trustees annually review CT’s risk assessment in consultation with the management team. The last such review was in May 2024.

# Objectives and activities

## Summary of the Counselling Togethers objectives:

To provide relief to persons in need of emotional, psychological and spiritual support by the provision of professional counselling from a range of recognized approaches and the provision of training for those involved in professional counselling, both being in accordance with The Association of Christians in Counselling and Linked Professions' statement of faith.

## Summary of Counselling Togethers activities:

We have been working in the New Forest since 2005 and now also in Christchurch and the surrounding areas. We offer a safe, secure and highly confidential counselling service from supportive and empathic counsellors, at a range of venues. Counselling Together is supported by a number of local churches both in providing counselling locations and financial assistance. All our counsellors work on a voluntary or reduced cost basis.

This means that we can negotiate fees with clients that are below the market rate, in line with their personal financial situation, to ensure that all have access to a professional and local counselling service. One of our key aims is to try and ensure that nobody is denied counselling on the grounds of affordability.

We offer a range of interactive training seminars on topics which are open to everyone to attend e.g. assertiveness, depression, loss, and bereavement. We also run courses for churches on Christian counselling and when a pastoral need may benefit from counselling input.

In planning our activities for the year, we kept in mind the Charity Commissions guidance on public benefit at our Trustees meetings.

Counselling Together is supported by an excellent team of volunteers who give their time to provide counselling to clients, develop and deliver training courses and help run the service. Counselling Together is not a grant making body.

# Review of the financial year

## A note from our Chair of Trustees, Peter Parslow:

A low demand for counselling continued through much of the year, only picking up right near the end, so we have continued our “road show” visits to local churches. Building on a local MPs 'mental health consultation' meeting, we had a few conversations with other local charities offering related mental health services in the area and may sign post clients to them or have clients sign posted to us.

We continue to have a stable team of trustees, freelance staff and volunteers. The trustees are able to rely on Sue Ingram, our Counselling Manager, and Alan Boyce as Administration Manager to run the charity. Early in the year, most of that team met with most of the counsellors which was a good opportunity to get to know one another. In October, Loraine Chirgwin handed over as bookkeeper to Phil Cole. Nigel Gooding has again examined our accounts.

During the year, we revisited part of our trust deed concerning payments to trustees and related persons, for services. In correspondence with the Charity Commission we established that this was acceptable for us in controlled circumstances, but to make things clearer we set about revising our trust deed based on the current Charity Commission template. This will only take effect in 2025.

Sue Ingram, as Counselling Manager, has continued to coordinate our counsellors. Two of our volunteer trainee counsellors qualified and have left to begin work. We recruited two new trainees and one qualified and remains with CT as a qualified counsellor. One counsellor took six months sabbatical mid-year and returned.

We are extremely grateful to those churches and individuals who have supported us financially, with donations making up about 1/3rd of our income. For the first time we set ourselves a fund raising budget and focused a few activities on that, raising both money and awareness in Milford, New Milton, and Brockenhurst. I am grateful to Alan for getting several donations. But with client fees down, we made a loss bringing our balance down to about three months budget.

We are also grateful to churches who have opened up their facilities once again for counselling sessions and meetings. This enables our ongoing objective of keeping counselling fees low so that nobody is denied first class counselling on financial grounds.

We have received excellent feedback this year:

- "I felt supported and listened to, which has reassured me I can be more open and ask for help"
- "I now know it's OK to love my past self and inner-child and not allow her to control my current thoughts and actions "
- "A safe place where you can unpack all the elements of problems which are affecting your life"

Key performance data for the year ending 31 December 2024:

- Clients counselled: 30
- Clients completed counselling in the last 12 months: 16
- Annual (12 months) counselling sessions: 465
- Clients receiving the benefit of grants from our bursary fund during the year: 15

## Financial Review

### Reserves Policy:

Counselling Together has a Reserves Policy, adopted in November 2016, which requires three months of operating costs to be held as a Reserve. This was reviewed and reconfirmed by the Trustees at a meeting in October 2022.

### Financial structure overview:

Counselling Together charges fees for counselling services which are typically below commercial rates. We are supported by regular donations from local churches and individuals that help to subsidise fees for clients.

We received a grant of £2,000 from Dorset Community Foundation's Neighbourhood Fund for our core funding costs. We received support from Ichthus People Association which paid £250 for the printing of new leaflets, and from the Strategic Solutions Community Foundation which provided £1,750 to produce a new video, both of which are used to promote the services that Counselling Together can provide.

With an increased demand for the use of Counselling Together's Bursary Fund, we were very grateful to receive donations to this fund of £1,345 from a Hampshire County Councillor's annual grant allowance, £1,000 from the Churchill Foundation, and £500

from J.P. Morgan. These were vital in topping up the Bursary Fund to ensure that the charity can continue to provide financial support for those of its clients who otherwise would be unable to obtain counselling due to their financial circumstances.

Counselling Together also organised a number of fundraising events during the course of 2024 which contributed £944 to the total income.


Of the total outgoings 22% (27% in 2023) is spent on counselling and supervision costs with 62% (65% in 2023) paid to sub-contractors to carry out the Counselling Manager, Bookkeeper and Administration Manager roles at below normal market rates.

Counselling Together does not hold funds for investment.

## Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:

Signature(s): 

Full name(s): Peter Parslow

Position: Trustee (Chair of Trustees)

Date: 28th April 2025