



**SURVIVORS OF
BEREAVEMENT
BY SUICIDE**

National Helpline 0300 111 5065

National Office:
The Flamsteed Centre
Albert Street
Ilkeston
Derbyshire
DE7 5GU

Tel: 0115 944 1117
admin@uksobs.org
www.uksobs.org

NATIONAL NEWSLETTER

March 2018

Dear All,

In light of the recent abuses connected to some charities working in the international aid sector, which has been deeply troubling, may we assure you that as our legal duty as Trustees we act in the best interests of our charity and in particular act with due care and diligence. We have the appropriate policies, procedures and practices in place to make sure that everyone is kept safe. The Trustees address any notifiable events vigorously and transparently.

2018 finds our charity facing some important challenges including General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). SoBS will be expected to be fully compliant with this new legislation by 25th May 2018. This legislation will have an impact on all groups and Helpline Volunteers in relation to the records they hold regarding survivor's personal information. Further guidance will be issued from Head Office in the near future. You will find within the newsletter a form of authorisation which will need to be completed if you require to be on our mailing list.

On a positive note, it was great to see so many of our Volunteers attend our First Annual Business Meeting in October 2017 and the Board hope that even more Volunteers will be able to attend our 2018 meeting on Saturday 10th November. Their contribution to discussions regarding serious and difficult issues facing the future of our charity were very valuable to the Board and all Volunteers are invited to email Head Office at any time with any concerns or suggestions that they would like the Board to consider.

2017 saw new groups opening and sadly the closure of others when new Volunteers could not be found, when current Volunteers have been unable to carry on. Also, sadly due to a shortage of Helpline Volunteers, we have had to make the difficult decision to suspend our weekend service. Fortunately, due to the dedication and hard work of our Helpline Volunteers we are still able to offer this service 9am to 9pm Monday to Friday giving vital support to survivors often at the early days of their bereavement. This is very difficult work as Volunteers who are alone and speak to survivors' who are often very distressed. If you are interested in becoming a Helpline Volunteer, Group Volunteer or Group Leader or would like to know more about the role please email Head Office at admin@uksobs.org

In responses to requests for more information regarding existing Trustees, there will soon be short biographies of all Trustees put on the SoBS website. The appointment of non-survivor Trustees was discussed at the Annual Business Meeting and your opinions were extremely helpful to the Board and we will now welcome applications from non survivors who have skills that will help to secure the future of SoBS. Currently we have several Trustee vacancies on the Board and would invite any person who would like to find out more regarding the trustee role and commitment

requirements, or if you would like to attend a Board meeting to find out more then please email our Chief Officer Eric Thwaites at Head Office.

On behalf of the Chair and Board I want to say thank you to all our Volunteers for all their hard work in the different posts. Many people have been helped because of their commitment to the work that we all represent.

Joy Heal (Trustee and Uttoxeter Group Leader)

Trish Thomas M.B.E



SoBS longest serving volunteer, Trish Thomas has been made an M.B.E. (Member of the Order of the British Empire) in the New Year Honours List.

This is in recognition for her many years of service running the Gloucester SoBS support group and for her work developing a new police protocol designed to improve both the experience and the support given to survivors' at the most devastating and vulnerable start of their bereavement journey.

Trish lost her husband to suicide in 1994. Following her tragic loss, she tried to look for support, but found that there was no support specific to suicide bereavement available.

Over the last 20 years she has dedicated herself to improving the support available to those bereaved by suicide. What follows is just a snap shot of her many achievements.

Trish's work with the Police:

Trish first began her work with the police and to improve suicide bereavement information and support in 1998; and was instrumental in the development of a Traumatic Bereavement leaflet for officers to provide to the bereaved, as well as Guidance for officers delivering tragic news.

She first made contact with Gloucester Police and has since established links with many other Police Forces including Norfolk, Warwickshire, Bedfordshire and Northumbria and more recently Wiltshire, West Mercia, Merseyside, Cumbria, Cheshire, Lancaster, Thames Valley and West Yorkshire. In 1999 she spoke at a Devon and Cornwall Police Traumatic Bereavement Conference.

Trish has worked with the Gloucester Police to develop a new protocol for officers to follow when dealing with sudden deaths and has since worked with other police forces to initiate the new protocol. Notably, following the delivery of two training sessions

with West Yorkshire Police, she is grateful that one of their training officers wrote an IT training module that has since been shared with other forces and the NHS.

She has provided training and workshop sessions for a number of police forces and voluntary groups and twice attended Lancashire Police training conferences for Family Liaison Officers and gave a presentation at Greater Manchester Police Family Liaison Officers training conference.

Trish's work with NHS and other Mental Health organisations:

Trish has organised conferences including 10 annual Mental Health training conferences in partnership with the 2gether NHS Foundation Trust.

Trish has also spoken at several conferences including the Samaritans annual conference, Community of Safety & Improvement Practice conference in Bristol, Plymouth MIND conference; Swindon SoBS conference; Manchester University conference and Oxfordshire NHS conference.

Trish developed partnership relationships with Gloucestershire Suicide Prevention Partnership Forum, Healthwatch, Gloucestershire, Mental Health & Well-Being Stakeholders Group and her local NHS Primary Care Trust and 2gether NHS Foundation Trust to raise awareness and to tackle Mental Health and Suicide issues.

Trish was an active member of LINK from 2009 – 2012 and contributed to the task group delivering reports on suicide and self-harm prevention. She continues to network and maintain active and positive links with allied statutory organisations and voluntary sector groups such as Eating Disorders, Crisis Intervention, Re-Think, Suicide Crisis, Samaritans and Cruse.

Trish's campaigns:

She successfully campaigned to ensure that suicide prevention measures were included in design of a new multi-storey car park adjacent to the main hospital's A&E department and has contributed to task groups looking at suicide prevention at known suicide 'Hotspots' and Media monitoring on the reporting of suicide.

Trish's contribution to SoBS:

In 1997 Trish was invited to join a steering group set up to develop the charity which at that time only had 4/5 groups widely separated geographically, into an organisation with national reach, able to offer support to many more of those bereaved by suicide. She joined the steering group and took on the role of National Liaison Officer, a role she continued in until 2000, developing contacts with both statutory agencies and other voluntary groups. In 1998 she was the first person to be shown on television (BBC) talking about suicide bereavement and subsequently was asked by other TV companies to assist with the planning and content of further programmes.

In 1999 Trish opened the Gloucester SoBS group and soon organised the first SoBS weekend residential retreat event. She continued to organise annual retreats for the next 15 years and

is delighted that a committee of group members now continues to organise these annual events to which people come from all over the country.

Trish worked as part of a small team to re-write the SoBS booklet Support After a Suicide and the SoBS Volunteers Operating Manual.

Trish continues to volunteer as Group Leader and facilitator of the Gloucester SoBS Group which is entering its 19th year.

I am sure that everyone would agree that Trish's M.B.E. award is so deserved in recognition for her outstanding work with suicide bereavement that spans over 20 years.

The Chair and the Board of Trustees would like to congratulate Trish on her M.B.E. and wish to thank her for all of her hard work and contribution to SoBS.

A message from our Ambassador

Angela Samata



"I'm delighted to accept the role as Ambassador of the Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide. I feel privileged to be asked to represent the work that SoBS do and the continued part that our work plays in the national conversation about the vital need to provide support for those bereaved by suicide.

The work and the people that make the Charity all that it is are very close to my heart and I feel honoured to be asked to take up this role.

I'll never forget the relief that I felt as I walked into a SoBS support group for the first time in 2004. I'm humbled now to be able to encourage others to access SoBS support and to give others the chance to experience the same support I received.

I followed the path on many before me, first receiving support and then feeling compelled to give a little back to a Charity that played a fundamental part in where I am today. As a Helpline Volunteer and a Group Leader I gained valuable insight into our work. As a Trustee and Vice Chair I gained valuable insight into how our work is vital at both a local and national level, and as your Chair from 2010-2014 it was my great honour to work on the Board and to ensure our place in the national conversation.

I was delighted that the BBC brought our work to the fore in our documentary Life After Suicide. Watched by over 3 million people, the film featured the SoBS Liverpool support group, giving a real insight into how our groups work and the vital support they offer. I hope to continue to promote our work and I look forward to working with you."

Angela Samata

An excellent event in Cheltenham!

The 23rd June 2017 saw over 100 people gather in Cheltenham at the 10th SoBS +2Gether NHS Trust Event and this year the Zero Suicide Collaborative had been kindly invited to join.

The day was chaired by Adrian James, who as many of you know was the first chair of the Zero Suicide Collaborative (he pulled together meetings to discuss the ideas during 2013, with the launch of the Collaborative to over 200 people from across the region taking place in October 2014. The rest, as we say is history!

A special thank you is due to Trish Thomas, who has been the driving force behind these conferences. This event was a cause for celebration, as this was the 10th year! Many thanks to Trish for her incredible persistence and determination, which has seen so many positive changes take place, and so many people helped. Well done Trish.

Along with Gordon Benson from 2Gether Trust, Trish had worked hard to pull together an excellent programme, with input from a range of inspirational speakers:

Clive Corbett, Head teacher of Pershore High School spoke movingly of the death of a young student and his determination to do whatever he can to prevent further tragedies.

Kystyna Hebb talked honestly about the complexity of gender issues in children, helping us to understand some of the challenges for these children and their parents and teachers.

Jeremy and Anne Davies told us about their experiences in setting up CIREN, a new self-help project.

Carole Hedges and Mandy Leonard from Swindon MIND told us of the value of the Wellbeing House in Swindon, and the encouraging development of the Alexandra Wellbeing House in Gloucestershire.

Corinne, Gordon and Sue facilitated a discussion about the MINDFUL EMPLOYER scheme and the importance of helping employers to support staff through any mental health challenges.

Dr Jo Black Perinatal Consultant Psychiatrist gave us a fascinating insight into the support available for women with mental health concerns both before and after birth, and the increased service soon to be developed in Gloucestershire.

Adrian, Corinne and Sue were able to finish the day by spreading the word about the South West Zero Suicide Collaborative.

Many thanks to all contributors for a truly inspiring day. We look forward to next year's conference!

Sue Wood

News from Swindon SoBS



Darren Johnson from Nationwide with Jan Kilby Swindon SoBS promoting awareness at Wakefield House, Nationwide, Swindon on Tuesday 6th June 2017.

Several Nationwide work colleagues have come forward to support The Engaging Men Programme barbecue and football event which was hosted by Darren Johnson on behalf of Nationwide. This was held on Sunday July 30th at the cricket pavilion, Pipers way, Swindon, Wiltshire.

Scunthorpe Survivors of Bereavement Group Caravan

Dear Group Leaders,

During the past five years our group, led by the Shrimpton family, have fund raised to purchase a mobile holiday home as a retreat for those who have suffered bereavement by suicide.

In August of 2016 we had accrued £42,000 with our fund raising events and with the help of friends and family, who also raised funds for us.

In August 2016 we presented our case to the Board of Trustees at Derby, with total costings and provision of providing one weeks free holiday in the mobile holiday home at Thorpe Park, Cleethorpes. This included financially maintaining this facility by use, with our continued fund raising events. This would imply no financial outlay by the Trustees.

The Board of Trustees accepted our proposals and we purchased an eight berth mobile home in September 2016 at Thorpe Park.

We have named the holiday home "Russ Way", in memory of our Scunthorpe Group Leaders two sons, Russell and Wayne Shrimpton.

This year has seen us refurbish the home with all facilities, i.e. TV, radio, bedding and all kitchen requirements, also four bicycles.

In June 2017, local members who attend the sessions, have had the first use of this facility.

We would now like to extend this for other groups to have the opportunity of a week's holiday, at no cost, other than finding their own transport to this area. The only stipulation would be is that the Group Leaders would have to recommend people from their groups so that we know that they are genuine survivors who would benefit from this offer.

Group Leaders of each branch, for bookings of the mobile holiday home, please contact us:

Marc Shrimpton – 07837988421

Or Emma Shrimpton - 07818050392

Gloucester Annual Retreat 2017

Lichfield

Last October 2017- about 40 people gathered at The George Hotel in Lichfield for the start of the annual retreat weekend. Amongst many familiar faces were also some newcomers. Very soon, the buzz of friendships being renewed, or made for the first time, could be heard. Deep conversations and light-hearted chat were taking place throughout the lounge area.

This was to be the first time that we had used Lichfield as a venue. It proved to be a popular choice and a new location for many. There is plenty to do in the city, including visiting the magnificent Cathedral, strolling round the shops and market, learning about Samuel Johnson, or taking in the fresh air on a lakeside wander. Indeed, a weekend is scarcely long enough! We were well looked after by Abbie and her team at the hotel.

The usual Retreat activities and workshops were available for those who wished to take part - craft, photography, therapy treatments, group discussions, music, poetry and a not-too-difficult quiz! As at previous retreats, the Saturday evening Candlelit dinner was a special time of remembrance. The weekend concluded on Sunday morning with a short, bespoke service in the Cathedral.

This year, we are returning to Launde Abbey in Leicestershire, where we were made most welcome two years ago. If you would like to join us, contact details are on the SoBS website.

Margaret Carter

Hatfield SoBS 2nd Anniversary



SoBS emblem cake toppers helped to mark the Hatfield SoBS groups 2nd year of existence and they went down a treat!

In 2016 to mark their first year in existence a very kind SoBS member donated a tree for all the members of SoBS and deceased loved ones. The group marked their second anniversary with a Memory Walk to the tree, which took place on Sunday 26th November 2017 at Heartwood Forest, Sandridge, Hertfordshire.

Sheila Stapleton
Hatfield SoBS Group Leader

Chester Cathedral Memorial Service 21st November 2017

I am a retired fruit farmer, an agricultural chaplain, and a survivor of a suicide death. I have trained to give support to those bereaved or affected by suicide, to provide a confidential, non-judgemental, listening ear for however long it takes.

Our memorial service has been an opportunity to come together in a supportive and caring environment, a space for thought and reflection and by the lighting of a candle a chance to remember before God our loved ones and to give thanks for their lives, to comfort one another and to share our stories.

9 years ago, my eldest son Jeff, aged 34, took his own life.

As a survivor it has been a long painful journey not to mention the years it has taken to find a new normal. As Stephen Oliver said in his opening lines of his book, *Inside Grief*, "No one ever told me that grief is so visceral and so voracious in its capacity to consume memory, confidence and concentration."

You think you are going mad. You replay the moment you receive the news over and over again in your head. And ask WHY?

On Tuesday 10th June 2008 my husband Colin and I had been attending an agricultural chaplaincy fund raising supper and the speaker the corn dolly man was sharing the ancient rites attached to corn dollies in birth, marriage and death, when we were called away. How ironical.

The lead chaplain had received a phone call from my youngest son to say that his brother Jeff had died. He had found him in the top building. He tried to revive him but it was too late.

The chaplain insisted on driving us back to the fruit farm and although it was only a short journey, it seemed like a lifetime. As he drove us back home, he spoke kind words of support, knowing that I had a strong faith and trust in God. These words saw me through the darkest of days and the longest of nights.

He believed that God had recognised the pain that Jeff was in and had called him home. God had shown him the way and had given Jeff peace, a peace that this world could not give.

Back at the farm only two policewomen remained on duty and eventually they allowed me to see Jeff. As I approached I noticed that he was covered by a white sheet, which they offered to remove. I knelt down next to Jeff and noticed that all the lines of pain and anguish, all the stresses and strains, had gone from his face. As a loving mother how could I deny my son that peace? As I gently held Jeff in my arms I felt a strange presence, an out of body experience and an unexplainable calm that I had never felt before.

I became aware of Mary, Jesus' mothers' presence close by and felt her outpouring of love and warmth, for she knew how painful it was to lose her 34 year old son under such tragic circumstances. I drew on Mary's strength and her love for her son Jesus.

I feel assured that God had called Jeff and he is now at peace.

Easter is tough for me.

But in the cold light of day **Denial** set in.

Was it real?

Had I dreamt it?

Had I imagined it all?

How can this be?

I had only spoken with Jeff at a quarter to six that evening. We had looked at a different caravan for him to live in. He seemed really excited at the prospect of having a bigger caravan with plenty of room so that his six year old daughter could come to stay with him for sleep over.

We had hugged goodnight see you in the morning.

I began **Bargaining**

What if I'd listened more?

What if I'd cared more?

What if I'd been there for him?

What if I'd insisted he lived with us in the house instead of a caravan, a leaky one at that?

What if I'd been a better mother? Mothers are supposed to look after their children aren't they. No matter how old they are.

Oh the guilt

I was consumed with guilt and pain.

I felt ashamed and helpless.

I didn't want to live in this black hole.

I didn't want these dark days and sleepless nights. I remember seeing many a sunrise and glorious sunset and remember drinking lots of tea. Food just seemed to appear from nowhere.

How was I going to get through the funeral and the eulogy? The funeral for me was a surreal experience so many people packed into the church and yet I felt so alone and the pain.

A myriad of emotions, I couldn't cry; I just wanted to scream.

Weeks later I became **Angry** and wanted the answer that we all want; WHY? I looked to blame everyone even God. Why did he call him? Why did he show him the way?

Why hadn't his CPN noticed he was suicidal? Jeff had only seen him 10 days earlier and I had told him Jeff was depressed, he wasn't washing, Jeff was drinking and seemed lethargic.

And **Depression** set in.

I struggled to live through these dark days and very long nights.

I was advised to attend Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide.

In those early years they gave me that safe confidential space to share my story, to rant and to rave about what had happened, they helped me to remove the guilt and to understand that we are all responsible for our own lives as well as our own death. SoBS helped me find a new normal, a new life without my son.

But Acceptance and my true healing only came three years ago when I felt called to attend an International Farmers' Dialogue in India. Part of the trip included a visit to farming families that had been bereaved by suicide. It was the very first time I had met a mother whose son had taken his own life. The interpreter shared the Indian mother's story with me and he shared my story with her and as our eyes met, we hugged and we cried uncontrollably.

I then met a couple who had lost their son to suicide. The dad was holding close to his chest a picture of his son visible for all to see and he was crying. I just put my arms around him and we cried together.

Our Indian guides, two young men from the Akola Agricultural University "tut tutted" and said that this is not done in India. I apologised for putting protocol aside, BUT at that moment in time we were just two parents who had lost our sons to suicide.

Although I have now met many mothers whose sons have taken their own lives in tragic circumstances I can only empathise and listen to how they are feeling because until you have walked in

the other mother's shoes, lived their lives, you don't really know the depth of their grief.

There is no right or wrong way to grieve following a suicide.

So be kind to yourself.

Be kind to one another.

Be patient with each other.

Families support one another by talking to each other; share your feelings and your tears.

Our men folk find it hard to share their emotions.

Men don't cry do they?

Through your tears comes healing even Jesus wept over the death of his friend Lazarus.

Finding a new normal and acceptance can take many years.

I'll finish with this beautiful poem by Randall Stepp.

Survivor

I will come and stand beside you,

And offer you my hand.

I have been where you are,

So I am able to understand.

I have experienced the same emotions,
the shock and the disbelief.

Felt the weight of the stigma,

That amplifies our grief.

I've been wide awake at midnight,

with worry weighing on my mind.

I've searched and searched for answers,

That I have discovered I'll never find.

But I have faith that I will make it.

And find a reason to live once more

I'm now a suicide survivor

I'm not the person I was before.

Thank you

The Chester Cathedral Memorial Service **Order of Service**

A service of reflection and memory
Tuesday 21st November at 7.00pm

WELCOME - Canon Jeremy Dussek

OPENING RESPONSES

We meet in the name of Jesus Christ who died
and was raised to the glory of the Father

We are here to remember our loved ones who have died
to pray for them, as they pray for us.

We are here to continue to give thanks for their lives
and celebrate their memories which surround us

We are here on our own journey in life,
searching for your help

as we face the future with questions, fear and faith.

READING - Charley Alvis Amparo – Suicide Liaison Supervisor

Lighting of Candles

We light this candle as a sign of hope.

May the peace, hope and love that is God
be with us all.

All are invited to come forward to light candles

Compassionate God,

may this light embrace us in our every need, in our sorrow and
in our hopes.

May this light bring to us peace, joy, strength and love.

May this light illuminate the path beneath our feet;

to lift us up when we stumble,

to guide us when we lose sense of the way,

to heal us from the pain we feel,

through Jesus Christ, who is the way, truth, the life and light of
the world.

Amen.

POEM - The Dash by Linda Ellis

Emma Walker

Reading - Revelation 21. 1-7

Richard Brown, Listening Ear, Merseyside

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven
and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.
And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of
heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.
And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'See, the home
of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be
his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe
every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and
crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed
away.' And the one who was seated on the throne said, 'See, I
am making all things new.' Also he said, 'Write this, for these
words are trustworthy and true.' Then he said to me, 'It is done!
I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To
the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water
of life. Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be
their God and they will be my children.
Thanks be to God.

REFLECTION

ACT OF REMEMBRANCE

Music played *Little Did I Know* by Ado Matheson

After a time of remembrance, we say together

In darkness and in light,

In trouble and in joy,

Help us, heavenly Father,

To trust your love,

To serve your purpose,

And to praise your name,

Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

READING - Denis Keating Shared Experience

Monica Haworth, Agricultural Chaplain and SoBS Group Leader

PRAYERS ending in THE LORD'S PRAYER

BLESSING Canon Jeremy Dussek

May the love of the Lord Jesus draw you to himself,
the power of the Lord Jesus comfort you in your sorrow,
the peace of the Lord Jesus fill your hearts,
and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be upon you and those you love, now and through eternity.
Amen.

WSPD Service 2017

A service in celebration of the lives of those lost to suicide, the
support given to those who have lost someone to suicide and
the work done by people and organisations to prevent suicides
took place at Gloucester Cathedral on Saturday 2nd September
2017.

The Cathedral worked in partnership with SoBS (Gloucester) and
Gloucestershire County Council Public Health Commissioning
Team to arrange this special service. Working in partnership was
absolutely key to the success of the service with shared
expertise, contacts and resources enabling a poignant and
supportive event to be delivered to over 150 people.

The Cathedral is working hard to realise a vision of increased and
improved access for all both physically and emotionally but also
intellectually and spiritually - still holding worship at the fore yet
widening opportunities to engage with the community and find
meaning in a very special place. Being able to host the Service
was a very important way of realising that vision and being part
of the planning team meant the Service could be tailored to
really meet the needs of those attending in terms of format,
remembrance and thanksgiving.

What was significant too was how far many attendees to the
Service had travelled and many from more local areas too. Some
attending had never visited Gloucester before and a great many
hadn't visited the Cathedral before. The Service has helped
provide all who attended a place where they are welcome,
supported and loved and where they can be part of a bigger
community working to prevent suicide.

As part of this project, the Cathedral will also deliver an
additional partnership project with Gloucestershire County
Council Adult Education Service, supporting adults in Recovery
and managing mental ill health through art.

The project has enabled nine adults who are recovering from
serious, enduring mental illness to attend regular art workshops
where they could develop skills, gain knowledge, meet new
people and work in a friendly group.

A core focus of this artist led course was the development of
individual artworks for display to coincide with World Suicide
Prevention Day & local Suicide Prevention Events.

The artwork was displayed on banners around outside the
Cathedral, and in a curated exhibition in the Cathedral cloisters
from 12-26th September 2017.

Helen Jeffrey - Engagement Manager Gloucester Cathedral

The Cathedral Church of Saint Peter and the Holy and Indivisible Trinity, Gloucester

Order of Service

Service to mark World Suicide Prevention Day 2017 Gloucester Cathedral Saturday 2 September 2017, 2pm in celebration of the lives of those lost to suicide, the support given to those who have lost someone to suicide and the work done by people and organisations to prevent suicides.

Please note that the term 'survivors' refers to those who have been bereaved by suicide.

Message from the Bishop of Gloucester, Rachel Treweek

This service is an important time to pause and celebrate the lives of all those who have died as a result of suicide. Our death is not what defines us but rather the person we were created to be, and today is an invitation to give thanks for the gift of the unique and precious lives of those we have loved and see no longer. There will be memories that bring joy and memories which cause pain, but in it all may there be peace and thanksgiving.

Today is also an occasion to give thanks for all those who have supported people who have been bereaved through suicide. Their support is a gift to be treasured along with the gift of all those individuals and organisations who work to prevent suicide. May their gifts of care be celebrated with thankful hearts.

During the service a number of candles will be lit. Even the tiniest of flames can never be overwhelmed by the dark, and it is my prayer that those candles will be symbols of hope reflecting the truth that the light and love of God will always be stronger than the darkness.

As you gather in your cathedral may you know the generous love of God revealed in the outstretched arms of Jesus Christ nailed to a cross; May you know the healing love of God revealed in the empty tomb of Jesus Christ declaring that God's life is stronger than death; And may you know the restoring love of God who never abandons us, but who goes on holding the pain of the world, and who one day will make all things new.

Welcome and Introduction Revd Canon Richard Mitchell

Hymn - Guide me, O thou great Redeemer

CELEBRATION OF THE LIVES OF THOSE WHO HAVE DIED **Prayer**

Lighting of first candle Dame Janet Trotter Lord Lieutenant of Gloucester

Bible Reading Wisdom 3 v1-5 read by Dame Janet Trotter

But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment will ever touch them. In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died, and their departure was thought to be a disaster, and their going from us to be their destruction; but they are at peace. For though in the sight of others they were

punished, their hope is full of immortality. Having been disciplined a little, they will receive great good, because God tested them and found them worthy of himself.

Music "Burning" Antony Griffiths. Used (with grateful thanks to his parents) with permission.

Antony took his life when he was 22. The previous year, he had graduated in Music from Lancaster University. He had just returned from a holiday in Thailand with his girlfriend, and they were both planning to move to Manchester shortly; he to a job he had just been offered and she to study for teacher training. His suicide was a shock to us all, since he appeared to have a bright future.

Poem - The Existence of Love

Read by Jennifer Taylor Chair of Gloucestershire Suicide Prevention Partnership Forum

I had thought that your death was a waste and a destruction, a pain of grief hardly to be endured.
I am only beginning to learn that your life was a gift and a growing and a living left with me.
The desperation of death destroyed the existence of love, but the fact of death cannot destroy what has been given.
I am learning to look at your life again, instead of your death and dying.

CELEBRATION OF THE MINISTRY OF THOSE WHO SUPPORT THE BEREAVED

Lighting of second candle Lt Col Andrew Tabor JP High Sheriff of Gloucestershire

Hymn - Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One is here

Prayers Survivors' Prayer led by Steve Carter Steve a member of SoBS (Gloucester) and a Lay Minister He has developed a project – Engaging Men – supporting male survivors

Survivors' Prayer

O God please help us to face our past, our hurts, our fears, walk with us through the darkness, hold us as we weep, as we scream in anger and rage. Help the hurting child within to know the meaning of love and trust in a world that has destroyed both, that we may discover the true meaning of the Cross through our own stories, and so find wholeness, freedom and peace. Amen

Song - A voice in the wilderness Performed by Steve Tidcombe (Gloucestershire Police Male Choir) and Colleen Powell and other members from the Treble Makers Choir). A cappella.

My heart was so heavy with longing for you. My arms were so lonely, lonesome and blue. Alone in my sorrow I heard a voice cry. A voice in the wilderness. A voice from the sky. Remember your loved one the voice seemed to say. Treasure good memories, for solace today and though there was no-one nobody to see. A voice in the wilderness gave comfort to me There was no quarrel, no reason to find. Why did you leave me, only grief in my mind. I miss you my darling and yearn for your touch. The longing won't go now I need you so much Believe me and you'll hear it, The voice from above The voice in the wilderness. The voice of true love.

Words of a bereaved person Margaret Carter SoBS (Gloucester Group)

A Survivor's Voice: My Voice in the Wilderness

Peace greeting Minister Christ is our peace. He has reconciled us to God in one body by the cross. We meet in his name and share his peace. The peace of the Lord be always with you All, and also with you.

Minister For the love and support of each other please introduce yourself to someone near you that you don't know, perhaps speak of why are you here today?

CELEBRATION OF THE WORK OF SUICIDE PREVENTION

Lighting of third candle Neil Savage Director of Organisational Development, 2gether NHS Foundation Trust

Hymn - Immortal, invisible, God only wise

Prayer - Lynn Mars: Mind, Alexandra Wellbeing House

Loving God, your Son Jesus Christ sought peace and solace in quiet spaces as the crowds pressed upon him with their presence and their needs. We pray your blessing upon individuals and groups who provide respite and space to those dedicated to the ministry of suicide prevention. Grant renewal to the supporter and the supported, that each may find fresh strength appropriate to their needs. This we pray in the power of the crucified and risen Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Words on pioneering work Jo Morley SoBS (Gloucester Group); CALM

A Survivor's Voice: From surviving to preventing

Music 'Feeling good' Anthony Newley and Leslie Bricusse
Performed by Kyla Brox, vocals, and Danny Blomeley, acoustic guitar

The Lord's Prayer

Hymn - You shall go out with joy

Prayer and Blessing led by Canon Richard Mitchell
The Lord bless you and watch over you, the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you, the Lord look kindly on you and give you peace; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and all those whom you love, and remain with you always. Amen.

Song Lifting the Blues Acoustic performance of 'Lifting the Blues, written and performed by both Kyla Brox, vocals, and Danny Blomeley, acoustic guitar.

As you move from your seat, please return to the west end of the Nave. There you can collect a pebble as a continued prayer for loved ones remembered at this service. Some of these pebbles were used at the service 10 years ago at Tewkesbury Abbey for the first National Thanksgiving Service for SoBS. There will be a retiring collection for SoBS. Donations can be left at the west door or as you enter the Cloisters. Please stay for refreshments in the Chapter House off the east Cloister walk.

Acknowledgement and thanks.

It is with sincere thanks and appreciation to the following people and organisations that helped with the organisation of this service today; · Gloucester Cathedral, including Revd Canon Richard Mitchell, Helen Jeffrey (Community Engagement Manager), Denise Paoletti (Events Officer) · Warner Chappell Music Ltd for their kind permission to use the song 'A Voice in the Wilderness' (which has been slightly amended for this service) · Steve Tidcombe from the Gloucestershire Police Male Choir · Colleen Powell (soloist), Naymond Campbell (conducting) and Layla Betteridge, Becky Amos and Anne Chisholm (from the Treble Makers Choir) · Kyla Brox and Danny Blomeley · Lifting the Blues charity - <http://www.liftingtheblues.co.uk>. Through music, (a) to provide support and information to the loved ones and carers of people with mental illness within Gloucestershire, and (b) to carry out work within local communities in Gloucestershire to destigmatise mental illness. · Tesco plc (Brockworth and Quedgeley) for their generous contributions for refreshments · Wm Morrison Supermarkets plc (Metz Way and Glevum Shopping Centre) for their generous contributions for refreshments · Waitrose (Cheltenham) for their generous contributions for refreshments · J Sainsbury plc (Barnwood) for their generous contributions for refreshments · Trish Thomas, SoBS (Gloucester Group) for liaising with supermarkets for refreshment contributions · The support team consisting of Margaret, Steve, Richard, Lynn, Dan, Christina, Beverley, and Dawn · Cloister Garth Prayer Space – Mary Pearce and Mariners Church volunteer team · Gloucestershire County Council Public Health would like to express their grateful thanks to all those who have contributed to the planning and delivery of this service, in particular those whose contribution derives from personal experience.

SoBS - Leamington Group 4 events in 2017 - raising funds for the Leamington SoBS Group

The first event of the year was on Sunday 16th April. Steve Vassell and a few friends got together and organised a charity football match and evening in Rugby raising funds for SoBS in memory of a friend they had lost to suicide. I would like to say a huge thank you to all who took part in the event, which raised £1,201.40.



The second 'event' was a cheque for £500 from ASDA in Leamington from their Community Fundraising scheme. Our charity was put forward by a member of our group, Eric and was chosen along with two other local charities to compete for the 'most green tokens' collected over a period of three months, and we won! This competition not only raised money but also raised awareness for the local SoBS group. After receiving the cheque from the Store Manager, Jon Clements and Jo Butler from the scheme, I was invited to take a stand in the store for a few hours on Saturday 10th June to raise

awareness by talking to people and giving out leaflets as they finished their shopping. We raised an additional £80. Thank you to Dave, Veronica, Jane, Penny and Julie who took part on the day.



The third event was The 3 Peaks Walk in Yorkshire which raised £200. Julie, one of our group members, lost her husband to suicide and her nephew, Danny, wanted to help our charity. He got together with a few friends, wearing our charity T-shirts to highlight the tragedy of suicide and braved the walk on 10th June. A big thank you to Danny and his friends for helping us.



The fourth event of the year was an invitation from Nick and Cheryl Wilkins to attend and speak at an "Open Mic" night on National Suicide Prevention Day (Sunday 10th September) at a pub in Leamington. Nick and Cheryl are involved with the charity 'Shelter' and people who are homeless and sometimes suicidal.

There were various speakers, including a local councillor, talking about their own experiences.

I spoke about our local SoBS group and the work we do to help and support people who have suffered bereavement by suicide. The evening was a great success and very entertaining with lots of local live bands. There was a raffle and cakes for sale, which raised £90 for SoBS and £90 for Shelter.



Thank you for inviting us, a big thank you to Dave, Paula and her husband who came to support the event and me.

With the money that has been so kindly raised for Leamington SoBS this year, I have purchased a tree and a memorial bench to be planted/installed in Victoria Park in Leamington early next year.



Jacqui Smith – SoBS Group Facilitator, Leamington

SoBS Liverpool News



Asda, Breck Road, Anfield, Liverpool awarded £400 first place for SoBS Liverpool as voted by the local community with their token scheme. The presentation to John Attwood took place at the store on the 11th November 17.

Sad closure of the North Wales Group

The Chair, Board members and Office staff would like to say a big thank you to Phil, Jean and Hayley for your contribution over the years which has been invaluable in so many ways and for the unmeasurable help and support that you all as Volunteers have provided.

Fund raiser for SoBS Uttoxeter

Survivors Joy Moores (Breckles), Chris and Sally held a fund raiser event for SoBS Uttoxeter at the Rolleston Club on 1st July 2017. Joy raised an amazing £1,475.00. It was a wonderful night of entertainment and we all released balloons in memory of



Joy's Son, Robert and all loved ones lost to suicide. Joy's friend Michelle also organised a cake sale, the cakes were made by the children who are part of the school walking bus. They raised a massive £130 which represents a lot of cakes. Thank you so much to all involved in organising and supporting both these events. Joy presented the SoBS Uttoxeter group with a cheque for £1,605.00 at our SoBS meeting in memory of Robert xxxx

Uttoxeter Race Course Charity Collection

On Tuesday 11th July, SoBS was the official charity for the Irish night event at the Uttoxeter Race Course.

We were given the use of a paddock box for the evening by Andy Simmell of Rayne Engineering (thank you for all you do for us Andy).

Andy joined us for the evening along with Survivors and volunteer collectors.

It was a quiet night regarding numbers in attendance at the races and it rained a lot, but the 10 collectors braved the weather with their collecting buckets and managed to collect an amazing sum of £1,015.71.



The money was used to train SoBS volunteers to enable them to support survivors either by running or helping to run support groups or by volunteering on the SoBS Helpline. The funding for training is essential and we are dependant totally

on donations and fund raisers to meet the cost.

So thank you so much to, Eric, Yvonne Jane, Jan, Di, Shan, John, Clare and Paul for your dedication to collecting donations and for making it such a fun and enjoyable night.

Yorkshire Building Society Charitable Foundation **Small Change Big Difference Event**

The Society supported the Charitable Foundations "Small Change Big Difference" event which ran from 19th September to 15th October 2016.

During this time their customers, colleagues and members of the public were asked to recommend a local charity to be considered to receive funds from the Society's Charitable Foundation.



I nominated SoBS and asked a few group members to fill a short form in too. I was thrilled when I received a letter and call to say our charity had been successful.

On December 13th I received a cheque (with Kay & Lyn

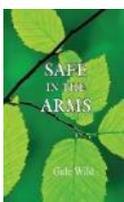
from the group) for £100 from Jack Croydon, a customer representative at the Yorkshire Building Society in Maidstone.

Donations from the Charitable Foundation are only possible thanks to customers that participate in the Small Change Big Difference scheme. The scheme allows customers to donate the annual pence of interest from their savings or mortgage accounts. The average donation is less than 50p per year and the maximum 99p per account. When all these pennies are added together it enables the Charitable Foundation to Support thousands of charities, the majority of which are recommended by its customers. I think it's a great scheme so I have now become a member.

Sheila – Maidstone group

Book Review

Safe In the Arms by Gale Wild



Safe In the Arms is an unflinching auto-biography written to highlight the fact that untreated family trauma reverberates through the generations.

The author shows how health services fail to address the recovery needs of young people

stranded in damaging situations and what happens in their subsequent lives as they grow older. Sufferers are often branded with shaming diagnostic labels which effectively write them off.

The book is an urgent call for health service providers to address the emotional health needs of this significant section of the population - to stop resorting to medication and to train and provide the numbers of trauma-therapists to begin to address the issue of intergenerational social and family re-enactment.

The author tells her life story from a childhood of living with parental emotional and physical tyranny, cruelty and coldness to abusive relationships and losing her sister to suicide.

Poems

Reflection

Another day for you to wonder, another day for you to mourn
It wasn't my intention to go before the coming dawn
My pain was deep within my heart and troubled head
It wasn't my intention to go without words said.
My frame of mind seemed normal, or so I heard them say
It wasn't my intention not to see another day
I did not mean to make you suffer or cause you so much pain
It wasn't my intention to never see you again.
Despair and confusion left my aching mind unsure
It wasn't my intention to suddenly close life's door
If only I could give you reasons and brush the tears away
It wasn't my intention to leave and not stay
I did not mean for you to grieve, now left alone to cry
It wasn't my intention to leave you, forever asking why
As the burdens of life's worries slowly ebb from my heart
It wasn't my intention to tear your soul apart.

The "Hole" Family

My family has a hole in it
My "whole" family has a hole
There is no "whole" family
There is just a family with a hole

A large gaping hole
No one can fill that hole
No one can enter that void
No one in my "whole" family

My "whole" family goes on
My "whole" family goes forward
We struggle to remain whole
But the hole remains

Sometimes the hole pulls us closer together
Sometimes the hole separates us
Can our arms embracing each other diminish the hole?
When someone says, "Is your "whole" family here?"
Or
"Do you want a picture of your "whole" family?"

I think to myself, "Can't you see the hole?"

Introducing SoBS new member of staff

Lesley Rose has joined our Charity to fill the position of Charity Bid Writer/Financial Officer. Her first day with us was Monday 20th November 2017.

Lesley had worked for a number of years for Derbyshire County Council in various roles of Finance. Lesley will work closely with our Chief Officer, Eric Thwaites and our Group Leaders during the course of the year. Lesley's main role is bid writing and finance but she will also offer administration support to the office.

You can reach Lesley by email on finance@uksobs.org

Lesley has boundless enthusiasm and has proven her ability to get to grips with the Charities accounts in a very short time. I am sure she will be an asset to our Charity in moving forward. We are delighted to welcome her to our small team.

Become a Trustee and make a difference

Trustees Wanted

Survivors of Bereavement by suicide are looking for new Board members to join them and help influence the future shape and direction of their organisation.

We are particularly keen to recruit individuals who have relevant work experience in areas such as marketing, fundraising, finance, human resources, business development, law and safeguarding, although this is by no means essential.

You should have a keen interest in mental health, enthusiasm and commitment along with skills and experience gained through family life, volunteering or professional roles.

You must be eligible to become a company director.

This role is voluntary with paid expenses and involves attending up to six Board meetings per year as well as involvement in chosen work streams and other events.

The following guidelines from the Charity Commission are available on https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/509664/cc3_lowink.pdf

If you are interested, please contact our National Office.

Tel: 0115 944 1117

email: admin@uksobs.org

You can also complete the following application form from our website and attach it to an email for the attention of the Chief Officer admin@uksobs.org

TRUSTEES APPOINTMENT APPLICATION Articles of Association Amendment 10.03.13

Dates for your Diary

Kent Retreat Weekend

20th – 22nd April 2018

For further information, please contact

Sheila on 01622 751976 or

07751 522125

Email: shebee330@gmail.com

The Compassionate Friends Scottish Gathering 2018

13th – 15th April 2018

A residential event is taking place in Perth and is open to anyone whose child, sibling or grandchild has died, at any age and from any cause.

More details and how to book can be found on our website at <http://www.tcf.org.uk/scottishgathering2018>

Strike Against Suicide

10th – 15th April 2018

The Big Walk is on! Starts 10th April 2018

Gill Boiling a regular at SoBS Aylesbury, supported en route by others from Aylesbury, will walk from Aylesbury to Brighton next April, under the banner of STRIDE AGAINST SUICIDE, to raise funds for SOBS and Hector's House. The latter is the charity that Robert and Belinda Stringer founded six years ago after the death of their son, Hector. They started their own charity because, at that time, they did not find SOBS or any other support. They are very active in preventing suicide in young people in this area through work in schools, and direct intervention when they hear that someone is struggling. Robert is also now a regular at our meetings and plays a great role in supporting those who are newly bereaved. The walk is Gill's wish to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the death together of her parents by suicide.

If you would like to be involved and to see the full itinerary, please see 'stride against suicide' on SoBs website.

Join us in Hove Lawns in Brighton Saturday 14th April 2018 to mark the finish of the Stride Against Suicide Charity Walk – which is raising funds to help those affected and bereaved by suicide.

20th Gloucester SoBS Retreat

19th – 21st October 2018

To be held at Launde, Abbey, Leicestershire

Further details from Margaret Carter:

onemargaretcarter11@talktalk.net

Tel: 07810 386216

Or

Amanda Miles:

amandatextiles@hotmail.com

Submission of articles, news, events, reflections, etc., for consideration to the editor, Joy Heal. We reserve the right to publish those submissions that seem most relevant and suitable for the newsletter. Submission does not guarantee inclusion. Submissions can be sent via Email to Joy Heal sobs.news@googlemail.com or admin@uksobs.org

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**SURVIVORS OF
BEREAVEMENT**
BY SUICIDE

National Office,
The Flamsteed Centre,
Albert St.,
Ilkeston,
Derbyshire.
DE7 5GU.
Tel 0115 9441117

admin@uksobs.org
www.uksobs.org
National Helpline 0300 111 5065

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is a new EU law that will come into effect on 25 May 2018 to replace the current Data Protection Act, therefore all business and charities will have to comply.

Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide, Company Number 4754829, would like to keep you up to date with our free Newsletters.

If you would like to continue to receive Newsletters, tick this box

We do publish our Newsletter half yearly on our Website www.uksobs.org or we could email a copy if you provide us with your email address.

If you no longer wish to receive our Newsletters, tick this box

Name and address: _____

By giving your name and contact details, you are consenting to Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide updating our database accordingly.

Please return this form either to the above address or by email: admin@uksobs.org

Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide are committed to protecting your privacy and any personal data you share with us. We aim to be clear when we collect your data not store or share without your consent, whether you are using our service, interested in volunteering, making a donation or just browsing our website.