

## Background and Introduction to the RVT

**Each year about three thousand people die as a result of road collisions on the UK's roads. This represents an enormous loss to society in both a personal and financial sense.**



Each person killed will be someone's parent, or child, or a favourite relative, best friend or soul-mate, or maybe all of these.

Whilst government seeks to reduce the numbers of people killed and seriously injured on the roads, there is no magic formula that will entirely eliminate these tragedies. In Bedfordshire and Luton in recent years there have been pleasing reductions in casualty numbers. Nevertheless, in one of the smallest counties in the country, there are still more than 30 fatalities most years. The need to provide effective, personal support to those affected by death, or life changing injuries, resulting from road collisions, is a significant local issue. Who can provide that essential personal support? Key players in the formal processes that handle collisions, such as police, lawyers and the courts, have their individual roles to which they often add some personal support for individuals. The nature and pressures of their work usually causes such support to be short-term and limited.

Road Victims Trust seeks to fill that gap by providing support for the bereaved, and people otherwise affected by death, or life changing injuries, who are resident in Bedfordshire and Luton. During 2009 we hope to develop and expand our services to victims resident in Hertfordshire.

To those bereaved the loss cannot be quantified in financial terms. However, in hard cash terms it has been calculated that each death represents a cost to society of one million pounds. More significant, though, is to recognise the reality of what the statistics represent - horrific trauma caused to those bereaved by sudden, unexpected, violent death.

The service was founded in 1995. We were the first organised group to respond to a national working party that reported to government that there was a need to provide support to the families of road death victims.

The service is provided by a team of highly skilled, highly trained and highly committed volunteers, supported by a small professional staff. A very high quality of service was soon being delivered. **Her Majesty's Coroner for Bedfordshire** and the **Chief Constable**, have applauded the value of this work. From 2003 to 2005 the scheme was one of only three in the country selected for evaluation in a Home Office pilot project.

We are now seeking to establish a further RVT range of services based in Hertfordshire and on 5th January 2009 our first Hertfordshire member of staff will be joining our team.

### Purpose

The service is available to those bereaved, or otherwise affected by death, or life changing injury, by reason of road collision and who reside in the county of Bedfordshire. Road Victims Trust is founded on the principle that at the time of trauma there is a need for support so that individuals can begin a process what has happened to them.

The ethos of Road Victims Trust is to offer not only information, but human contact, by engaging with individuals and families at the point of crisis so as to build a relationship that allows them to feel heard, prepare for the events to follow and to start to think through, and beyond, what has happened to them. This early contact lays the foundation so that in the future the support can be used to work through the awful pain of loss or bereavement.

The support required may be limited to information provision, or, if appropriate, referral to other agencies. At the other extreme, it may involve emotional and legal support through the inquest, any criminal trial, and past the anniversary of the collision. In any event, Road Victims Trust forms a single point of contact for the individual or family, through which he/she/they may receive or access all the information required to deal with the aftermath of the collision, the support to make choices as to how to use that information, and the personal support required for a return to full functioning.

In September 2003 the **Road Victims Trust** became a local, independent, charitable trust and is now a Registered Charity. It is a non profit-making organisation and the services it provides are free. There is no statutory funding of the organisation. All

costs are raised by grants, donations and **fundraising events**.

In June 2008 the first Trustees were appointed to develop the Road Victims Trust in Hertfordshire.

A formal open evening to initiate these services was successfully held on October 1st 2008 and on 5th January 2009 the first Hertfordshire member of staff (Frances Bourne - Coordinator) will be joining our team. The RVT expansion into Hertfordshire continues to need support, for example specialist trustees, volunteers, fundraisers, a treasurer and of course donations! For further information please contact Frances Bourne at [rvtinquiries@hertsrvttrust.co.uk](mailto:rvtinquiries@hertsrvttrust.co.uk) or ring 01234 843345

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