

YANA telephone helpline goes 'live' from New Year 2024

A rural mental health helpline will go "live" from the new year, members of a leading Norfolk farmers' club were told.

The YANA (You Are Not alone) charity is launching telephone access to provide further rural mental health support, said Mid-Norfolk farmer Henry Kilvert.

He told about 25 members of Holt & District Farmers' Club at the December meeting that the charity has taken on three part-time staff, who will be taking calls in person from the New Year, initially on weekday mornings. "We are expanding the service offered by our helpline," said Mr Kilvert, who is chairman of YANA. "Instead of callers leaving a message and then receiving a call back, our team will be able to offer support," he added.

Since YANA was founded 15 years ago in Norfolk with the initial support of the Clan Trust charity, it expanded into Suffolk in 2012. Formally established as a charity in 2020, YANA now covers the whole of East Anglia, said Mr Kilvert.

The agricultural industry has seen too many lives lost to suicide, so YANA was started at the Norfolk showground in 2008, largely through the determined efforts of the charity's patron Melinda Raker.

He said that YANA gave confidential support for those in the farming and rural industries and could offer counselling. Mr Kilvert said that the charity has trained 370 volunteers to be aware of the warning signs of mental health issues, including depression, social isolation and changes in behaviour. In the last year 100 people including land agents and professional advisers had been trained at a cost of £38,000.

Mr Kilvert said counselling, which could cost up to £450 for a series of sessions, could be offered and was provided free. Obviously, providing practical help and advice was costly and YANA has been helped by organisations, farming groups, charities and fund-raising. He said that call volumes had increased significantly over the past three years and that with the launch of the new service from the New Year, a further rise in calls was expected.

He was thanked by Jimmy Fowell.

In closing, Martin Jensen said that the club's 75th anniversary dinner would take place at Gresham's on April 11. Tickets would cost £75 each and the guest speaker, who would propose a toast to the club, would be Viscount Raynham. A raffle at the dinner would benefit YANA.

He urged members to apply for tickets without delay as numbers were limited to 120. Payment could be made online.

In addition, Mr Jensen said that the proposed trip to Sweden would now depart on Tuesday and the party would return on Friday, May 31st.

YANA's helpline 0300 323 0400 or yanahelp.org or helpline@yanahelp.org

BLOB A free social event for farmers, Yarn in a Barn, will be held on Friday, January 19 at St Walstan's Hall, Norfolk showground, from 7pm, by YANA and Farming Community Network (FCN). A hog roast and entertainment by comedian John Ryan is on the menu. Details –<https://www.yanahelp.org/yarn-in-a-barn/>

