

THE W.A.Y. FOUNDATION
(The Widowed and Young Foundation)
CHARITY NUMBER 1072649

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2010

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

	2010	2009
	£	£
Income		
Members subscriptions	10,935	9,045
Members renewals	12,800	4,590
Members renewals on Just Giving	4,950	12,950
Donations	4,822	5,552
Charibands	0	0
Christmas Card Sales	15	60
Bank Interest	45	0
Gift Aid	9,297	2,437
Just Giving	0	0
Other donations	137	2,113
AGM	13,834	8,540
Holiday	360	350
Total Receipts	57,195	45,637
Expenditure		
Telecoms and Website	4,331	1,963
Advertising and promotion	7,844	9,916
Postage	1,277	1,578
Staffing costs	9,031	8,948
Printing & copying	963	642
Committee expenses	3,113	3,216
Christmas Cards		
Grants to local groups	2,779	2,610
Holidays	0	2,032
AGM and other meetings	8,106	13,538
Insurance	957	1,074
Other	1,189	882
Just Giving	211	207
Total Expenditure	39,801	46,604
Net (deficit)/surplus for the year	£17,394	-£967

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BALANCE SHEET

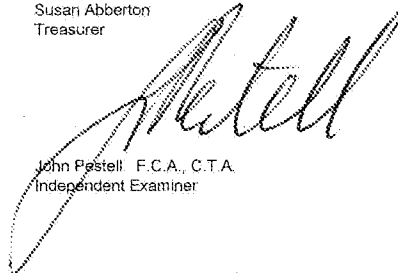
	2010 £	2009 £
CURRENT ASSETS		
Bank Current Account	27,021	19,627
Scottish Widows Bank Deposit Account	0	0
Lloyds Bank Fixed Term Deposit	20,000	10,000
	<u>£47,021</u>	<u>£29,627</u>
FINANCED BY:-		
Accumulated surplus brought forward	29,627	30,594
Net (deficit)/surplus for the year	17,394	-967
	<u>£47,021</u>	<u>£29,627</u>



Martin Smith
General Secretary



Susan Abberton
Treasurer



John Pestell F.C.A., C.T.A.
Independent Examiner

WAY Chairman's Report 2010

Caroline Doughty

WAY has been a huge part of my life and never more so than during the past two years as Chairman.

I joined seven years ago, about six months after my husband Nick died. It was Christmas and I was feeling pretty low, so I went along to a WAY lunch not far from me in north London. I was late, and bringing the lasagne, so was panicking about meeting a whole load of strangers... who would also be HUNGRY!

I needn't have worried. A woman took one look at my face as I fell through the front door and steered my girls away to look at the Christmas tree. Someone else put me in a chair and poured me a drink.

I cried. I drank a bit. We laughed a lot.

And that for me was the start of a long relationship with WAY – usually involving some tears, a few stiff drinks and a lot of laughter.

That day was the first time I felt as if I'd been with people who understood me since Nick had died. And that feeling has never left me.

I'm still as passionate about what we do today as I was 7 years ago, if not more so now that I understand the work and effort that goes into keeping this amazing organisation going.

Since that lunch I have had many roles in WAY, from the North London group to being a member of the committee.

Two years ago I was elected Chair and I said I would focus on five things:

- Communication
- Local groups
- Links with other organisations
- Holidays and
- Campaigns

We've made great strides in some of these areas, and in others I haven't done nearly as much as I wanted to. There is still a long way to go, but I know that if this meeting agrees to vote in Georgia as your new Chairman, then WAY is in very safe hands and will go on getting stronger and better as it moves forward.

Georgia, like me, is passionate about what we do. She's spent some time reading emails that come in to info@wayfoundation and, just like me when I first did it, she has found it a sobering experience. Desperate people stumble across us on the web and write, telling us their story, often quite raw with grief, people who really need help. But more urgently they need an answer, and writing back to these people focuses your mind on what it is WAY really does. The politics, finances and battles with technology go out of the window when you have to find a way to tell someone who's just lost their partner that life will, eventually get better.

Vodafone

Because I haven't managed to do all the work I set out to do two years ago, I applied last November for a Vodafone World of Difference grant.

Each year Vodafone pays people to work for two months for the charity of their choice – with the charity's approval. Last year 11,000 people applied and 500 were lucky winners.

I was one of them and last Monday I travelled to Birmingham to a huge reception for the winners, where we listened to some inspirational speakers and were given a new phone...!

On Monday next week I start my placement, and will work full time for WAY for two months, paid for by Vodafone. It's a chance for me to do some work between 9 and 5, rather than between 10pm and 2 in the morning.

I will be putting together a new booklet for new members, that gives more information about how WAY works and looks more professional and welcoming than the current stack of printed paper we send out.

I will be working on some more boring 'back office' tasks, like compiling a shared documents folder that volunteers can access to find information and letters they need to send out – to save us all writing and re-writing the same things over and over.

Three weeks ago I went on a course to learn how to write funding applications and I will spend some time using this knowledge to apply for some funds for WAY, to pay for our newsletter, some marketing materials, leaflet printing and design costs, and, if we're lucky, bigger things too. Events and holidays are obviously an area that we could look into subsidising for members if we can find the money.

There is so much more to do and I hope that I'll be able to help Georgia and Martin and really make the most of this two months to help WAY.

Achievements

I'm proud to say though, that we have achieved some things over the last two years.

Our communication has improved considerably – our new email newsletters look more attractive and professional and we have tried to increase the frequency of communication between the committee and volunteers, telephone team and area contacts.

Georgia recently held a lunch which all area contacts were invited to. Obviously they didn't all come, but she received valuable feedback and has sent out some advice and tips on what works well to all the areas.

I said we would improve on the technology we use, with tools that are freely available online and, if necessary, by investing in new technology.

Martin, Georgia and I have spent several months now working on a possible new members' system that we believe would transform the way WAY operates – we've worked on lists of what we need, and what we'd like in an ideal world; how it could work and how we could integrate all areas of our operation into it.

The ultimate aim is to have an area of the WAY website that you could log into where you could chat to each other, look at events, book holidays, find friends and offer support. It would help reduce the reliance on the local group structure, so you could see events that were taking place in a 10, 20 or 50 mile radius from where you live – and perhaps go to different places for different events. A meal in Oxfordshire and a walk in Berkshire, a day's outing in north Wales or a pub meet in Cheshire...

It would make life much easier for area contacts and would make it easier for others to organise and advertise events. The renewals process would be more efficient and our email newsletters would go out seamlessly to current paid-up members.

Well, that's the plan...

So now we have to find the money to pay for it – which is why we launched the WAY appeal last December and the iPad raffle last month. Between them they've raised £1,000 but we need to do so much more.

Louise Debicki organised the WAY lottery – you'll find a leaflet in your conference pack. I have already won a prize on this lottery – sadly it wasn't the £25,000 jackpot but the chances of that are higher than with the national lottery!

If half the WAY members joined in, we'd raise £3,000 a month, which would make an incredible difference to our finances. You might get lucky and win, too!

Next time you buy a national lottery ticket, please think about buying a WAY one instead.

Or you could email everyone in your address book and send them the link to our WAY appeal page and ask them to donate a fiver.

We need to raise about £10,000 and it's actually not that much money – not if everyone does a little bit to help.

Local groups

I said it was my goal to get some form of WAY activity up and running in every part of the country.

Well, it hasn't worked completely – but I'm proud to say we now have active groups in Kent, which has always been a problem area, and our first group in Cornwall, which is already meeting up two or three times a month and is planning their first holiday. If you want to spend some time on a Cornish beach this summer, I suggest you get in touch with our Cornish area contact who is only too keen to organise events for WAY members.

I supported him in organising his first event – a Sunday lunch for families – and people travelled the length of Cornwall to be there. There was a real desire for them to meet each other in person and Derek's enthusiasm has helped keep the ball rolling since.

If you'd like to start something similar in your area, talk to any of the area contacts who are here today – or any of us – and we'll give you some tips and advice.

This is what WAY was set up to do – and where it works, we do it so well.

Other organisations

I wanted to strengthen our links with other organisations, to learn from them and add value, to what we do and to them. I haven't had as much time or opportunity as I would have liked to do this – but we've made a start.

I began using Twitter last year and we now have 107 followers including Winstons Wish, Brake, CRY, SANE, Netmums, several hospices, funeral directors, bereavement counsellors and of course our members.

We've been contacted by two or three military organisations who follow us on Twitter and have been asked to supply pieces for their members' magazines, explaining who we are and what we do.

This is obviously a great way to let other organisations know what we're up to and one we'll continue to use.

I've spoken to various people in my area including the Devon and Cornwall Family Liaison Officers annual conference and at CRUSE training sessions across Devon.

We need to do this across the country to get the word out, and it's something any member of WAY can help with if they feel able to.

There's a piece of paper on every table for you to add your name and number to if you think you could help us by talking about WAY. We'll give you materials and support to help you – you can now use our new film. All you need to do is play the film and then answer questions – we'll give you a copy of the DVD to take with you.

Holidays

Sarah Wilkinson has done a fantastic job with our holidays and has arranged our first joint venture with The Kids And Me, a single parent holiday company I came across on Twitter. It's an adventure weekend in Wales in early June and should be great fun. If the weekend is a success, we hope to build on it in the future.

Campaigning was another area I said I would like to pursue and we are looking to take this further with a WAY member who has volunteered to take on the task. The idea is to look at things like pensions, Widowed Parents Allowance and Bereavement Benefit – find out where we're missing out and what's unfair about the system, and push for changes.

If you have a story to tell or an issue you're struggling with, then please put your name on the sheet and she will get in touch with you after the AGM.

Stepping down

So, after two years at the helm of this amazing organisation, it's time for me to step down.

It's been a very rewarding, but incredibly challenging experience.

I'd like to say some quick personal thanks – I promise this won't turn into an Oscars speech...!

Firstly to Beth. I heard Beth speak at the first AGM I came to. She stood up and told us about how Simon had died, in a hospice, the day before their daughter Elsa was born. I was blown away by her courage – and impressed that she could make us laugh during a very emotional talk.

Beth has to be one of the calmest people I know, always good in a crisis, and has devoted her time selflessly to WAY for years. She's done 4 years on the committee, run the telephone team, looked after area contacts and will always step in to do something when no one else is available. In the last three years she met Mike, fell in love, had twins and got married and even though she's working and dealing with double helpings of nappies and sleepless nights, she still gives time to WAY. Truly one of the most valuable members the committee has had over the years and she will be sorely missed.

I'd also like to thank Susan. When she took over as treasurer our accounts were in a bit of a mess and there were no systems in place. We didn't know how much we were spending, how much was coming in and how long we had before the money ran out.

Susan has run a really tight ship for two years, and I'm not the only one who has had to re-do an expenses form. We haven't always seen eye to eye, but that's because Susan has taken her job very seriously and I'd like to thank her for tremendous work in sorting out WAY's finances. The new treasurer taking over knows exactly where we stand and what to expect from a financial point of view, and everyone on the committee has a much clearer idea of the charity's finances. Thank you Susan.

Linsay Black is also stepping down today after two years as our press officer and I'd like to thank her on behalf of WAY for doing a great job at raising our profile with the media. Sharon was great at digging people out to respond to requests from the media for particular case stories. Linsay has continued to do that and also found opportunities to place our stories in the media, and has coached several WAY members through the process of magazine interviews. We need a new press officer now and I hope there is someone in this room who would like to take over this position. I'm sure Linsay will help you settle into the role and the committee will support you as well. It's a great role for anyone who either has PR or journalism experience, or who is interested in getting into this role professionally – a really great one for the CV and we'll help you make a success of it. Please come and see me if you are interested.

And lastly I'd like to thank Martin. I didn't know Martin when I joined the committee four years ago but he has become a true friend over that time. Working with him as General Secretary over the past two years has been a real pleasure and I don't think I'd have stayed sane doing it without him. Every time I've had a fantastical idea about doing something mad, it's Martin who's said we need to think this through... we've had a different approach, but together they've worked. We've spent many hours talking about how we can improve the way WAY operates so that it becomes a more efficient organisation that can grow, so that organising events is easier, so that communication is better and so that WAY is on a more sound financial footing to go forward. Not glamorous, not headline-grabbing, but it's been important work that I hope will bear fruit in the longrun. Martin devotes hours and hours of his time to WAY every week. His contribution is immense and while he may not be the best secretary at writing and distributing minutes of our meetings, he has an unrivalled knowledge of the workings of WAY and what goes on behind the scenes – from switching the telephone team's number around to what happens to members in the database when their membership lapses... I will miss our frequent chats, but maybe now we'll be able to chat about other stuff, rather than databases, which won't be a bad thing...!

Please join me in saying thank you, on behalf of WAY, to all our volunteers for all the work they do.

We'd love it if you joined us – as a regular volunteer, an area contact or a committee member. Or just as an ad hoc pair of hands who can help out from time to time when we're stretched, or people are on holiday, or someone's sick or busy at work. There are always jobs to do so please, please come forward if you'd like to give something back to this organisation that has supported you.

Every time I know that I've helped someone who is just starting out on this lonely journey, I know that this is one of the most worthwhile things I have ever done – and I urge ALL of you who are a little bit farther down that road, to think about how you can give back a little bit to help someone else. A cup of coffee, a walk in the park, a tea and a chat. Use your group list, phone a new member, tell them they're not alone.

They will never forget that hand of friendship – just like I've never forgotten the woman who reached out to me as I fell into that house at Christmas 2003.

So, that's it. It's been a blast, I've learned a lot, experienced a lot and I know that I will take the friendships and experiences I've had with WAY forward with me, through the rest of my life. I hope you will too.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to represent you, it's been a real honour, and I will miss it.