

## Annual Report 2014



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Welcome to WAY’s Annual Report for 2014. WAY is the only national charity in the UK for men and women aged 50 or under when their partner died. It’s a peer-to-peer support group run by a network of volunteers who have been bereaved at a young age themselves, so they understand exactly what other members are going through.

WAY was founded in 1997 and currently has almost 1,400\* members across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The charity aims to provide peer-to-peer support to young widowed men and women – married or not, with or without children, whatever their sexual orientation – as they adjust to life after the death of their partner.

To achieve this, WAY provides:

- A public website with guidance for members about getting through the first stages of bereavement as well as information about how their friends and relatives can help;
- A public presence on social media (e.g. Facebook and Twitter) to provide up-to-date information on WAY and current issues facing people who have been widowed at a young age;
- An information booklet upon joining, a quarterly printed newsletter and a monthly informational e-newsletter.

WAY also raises awareness of issues affecting those widowed young, campaigns on current issues and seeks out opportunities to publicise the existence of the charity wherever possible through the press and other avenues (see *Campaigning for Change*, p19).

Within this report the major issues and achievements of 2014 will be described, as well as an analysis of the general financial position of the charity and fundraising activities for the year (see *WAY in Figures*, p20).

We are also pleased to present an initial summary of our vision for the next five years, which we will present to members at the 2015 AGM and develop further over the course of the year (see *The WAY Forward: WAY’s 2020 Strategy*, p23).

\*This 2014 number appears to be smaller than our 2013 membership figure of 1,513. However, the 2013 membership figure included 430 lapsed members who had not paid their subscription fees. Thanks to the new database, we have been able to remove lapsed members from the system. Therefore, the 2014 figure includes fully paid up members only (see *Membership Statistics*, p22 for more details).

*“I made contact with WAY at a time when I was desperate. I was so reassured by my first contact with someone from WAY and realised that what I was going through was normal... Time has passed and the fog is clearing and I now have a group of friends who understand what I have been through without having to explain. Our meets are supportive but also fun for both the children and adults alike,”*

Paul.

## A Word from WAY's Chairman

2014 has been a year of big changes for WAY Widowed and Young – changes that are helping to establish the foundations of a stronger charity that we can build on over the years to come. This will ensure we can support our existing members as well as we possibly can, and also reach out to others who have been widowed at a young age who have yet to find us.

At the March AGM in Peterborough, we introduced a new organisational structure for our charity, following advice from the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO). Under the new structure, the Executive Board is now concentrating on governance and strategy while the Operations Team, headed up by a paid Operations Manager, is now responsible for running the charity on a day to day basis. (You can read more details about the new structure in the *Governance* section on p6.)

The other big achievement for 2014 is that the long-awaited new online members system is now finally up and running. Our superb new website is designed to streamline our communications, improve the joining and renewal process, and generally enhance the user experience for all our members – and for potential members too. We have almost doubled the number of monthly visitors to our website since the re-launch in March. We have already noticed an increase in membership numbers since it became possible to join WAY more easily online, with 849 new members joining WAY in 2014. The number of members joining us has nearly doubled from around 10-12 to 17-20 joining per week since online joining was launched in May. We have also noticed that more men are joining WAY since the online joining process was unveiled, helping to provide a better gender balance to our membership, which has traditionally included more women than men.

Members are using our online forum, messaging system and chat rooms to get in touch with each other in a safe environment and to provide mutual support and share advice on all kinds of subjects – ranging from inquests to explaining death to children. Members and Area Contacts alike are now able to organise events at both a local and national level far more easily through the events section of the website. And we hope that more members will pluck up the courage to arrange and attend more events as a result.

Of course, big changes like these are never without their teething problems. And there have been quite a few! But we must be doing something right as our 2014 Annual Survey of members found that 84% of respondents were satisfied with WAY overall and 94% would recommend WAY to others.

We want to continue growing our membership – so that we can offer more support to our existing membership whilst also raising awareness of this wonderful charity to other young widowed people who desperately need the reassurance and that 'can't be bottled' friendship, which can only come from those who just 'get it'.

The new online system has made it so much easier for us all to be reminded when our membership is due for renewal so that we can address renewals before our membership lapses.

Our automated renewals system now makes it easy for members to manage their membership online too.



As well as seeing an increase in income as a result of more people joining WAY in 2014, we also made the difficult decision to increase our membership fee for the first time in 10 years to help cover the increasing costs of running the charity. This increase from £15 to £25 per year (for new and renewing members) was implemented in September 2014 (see p14). We also focused considerable efforts in 2014 on seeking out trusts and foundations to help secure funding for WAY going forward. This will be a key responsibility of our Operations Team in 2015 and beyond. We will also continue to encourage our members and Friends of WAY to raise funds for us through initiatives such as those highlighted in our *Raising Funds for WAY* section on p14.

As well as providing peer-to-peer support for our members, WAY also exists to raise public awareness of the needs of people who are widowed and young. On a personal level, I have invested a lot of energy in our campaign work in 2014. Along with other prominent charities such as the Childhood Bereavement Network, Cruse and Gingerbread, we have been campaigning against changes to the Widowed Parents' Allowance that are due to come into effect in April 2017 (see our *Campaigning for Change* section on p19). WAY has been invited to contribute to debates at the highest level at the Department for Work and Pensions, which has greatly helped to increase our profile and visibility as a charity, as well as improving our leverage to fight for the rights of people who have been widowed at a young age.

In stepping back from the day to day running of the charity, the Executive Board has been able to concentrate on developing a preliminary strategy for WAY for the next five years called '2020 Vision' (see p23). This is something that has never been done before in WAY and if we are to grow and improve our charity, implementing an ambitious strategy is vital. As we approach our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2017, WAY's Board will continue to develop our strategic thinking so that we can build our membership and improve the support we can offer to our members, as well as improving retention rates over the longer term.

I joined WAY nearly nine years ago. It is an amazing charity – and I can truly say that it has been a lifeline for me. I don't know where I'd be without the support of my WAY friends! Of course, WAY wouldn't be where it is today without the commitment and dedication of our amazing volunteers who are at the coal face of our work – particularly our 79 Area Contacts across the country who welcome new members and coordinate dozens of events in their local areas. I'd like to take this opportunity to say an enormous thank you to all our volunteers – and to everyone who helps to make WAY the fantastic charity that it is!

Georgia Elms  
Chairman, WAY Widowed and Young

## WAY in Numbers – our impact in 2014



WAY had nearly 1,400 fully paid up members as of December 2014



WAY has doubled the number of monthly visitors to our website since our web re-launch in March 2014 (we had an average of 9,000 visitors per month by the end of 2014)



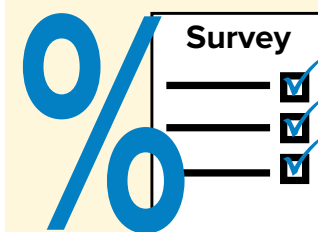
WAY's public Facebook page had more than 2,500 followers by the end of 2014



More than 500 people attended WAY's Big Picnic events at 30 locations across the country in May 2014



More than 75 WAY members and children gathered at Comrie Croft in Scotland in August 2014



WAY's 2014 Annual Survey found that:

- 94% of WAY members would recommend WAY to others
- 84% of WAY members were satisfied with WAY overall
  - 34% found us through Internet searches and 34% through word of mouth;
  - 12% found us through media coverage
- 86% joined WAY to meet others in the same situation; 63% for support;
- 47% for friendship
- 68% of members were definitely planning to renew their membership



WAY and our members were featured in 20 articles in national newspapers or magazines in 2014 (from *The Guardian* to *Good Housekeeping*), as well as appearing in six local newspapers (from the *Birmingham Mail* to the *South Wales Echo*)



More than 160 WAY members and children went along to WAY's activity weekend for families and children at Kingswood



At the end of 2014, WAY had 79 volunteers working as Area Contacts across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Between them, these volunteers organised approximately 1,000 local events, from coffee meet ups to barbecues



WAY members were interviewed on nine radio shows in 2014, from BBC Radio Bristol to Radio 5 Live, as well as being filmed for BBC TV documentary due to screen in Scotland in March 2015



More than 150 WAY members attended our AGM in Peterborough in March 2014



WAY raised more than £23,000 through various fundraising initiatives in 2014



WAY had more than 1,000 Twitter followers by the end of 2014



Nearly 700 people signed up to receive our Friends of WAY newsletter in 2014



More than 70 WAY members and children marked Father's Day at Hoburne Park in Dorset in June 2014



More than 400 WAY members and children went to CenterParcs in Sherwood Forest in October 2014



Governance

In 2013, the WAY Committee was given a governance review by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO). A full health check was undertaken on the way the charity was being run in accordance with the Charities Commission.

The WAY Committee was identified as carrying out a largely operational role, with some of the trustees putting in a lot of their time on day-to-day activities whilst balancing their responsibilities with their own grief, children and work commitments.

This is of course how many small volunteer-led organisations operate, but the amount of time needed to be spent on the operational duties was highlighted as becoming far too great. The NCVO therefore recommended that WAY should remove the operational responsibilities from the Committee and create a separate Operations Team to carry out these duties. This would mean that the Trustees would be able to focus more clearly on the future strategy and direction of WAY.

Over the last year, nearly 850 people joined WAY, bringing the total number of fully paid up members to nearly 1,400. However, we believe that there are around 100,000 people in the UK who are entitled to join WAY. This means that only 1.5% of potential members have found us and the vast majority are missing out on the invaluable peer-to-peer support we can offer one another.

If we are to reach out to these potential members and ensure that everyone widowed under the age of 51 knows about us, we need to change. With the Trustees purely focused on strategy we will be in a much stronger position to achieve this goal.

Following the NCVO review, in 2014 WAY appointed an Executive Board of five Trustees headed up by Georgia Elms as Chair with an Operations Team to manage the day-to-day running of the charity and volunteer support. This new structure was unveiled at our AGM in Peterborough on 8 March.

In January 2014, a paid Operations Manager was engaged on a part-time, temporary basis with a view to making the key role permanent in future, subject to funding. Following the restructuring of WAY, the Operations Team is now responsible for the day-to-day running of WAY, leaving the Trustees free to concentrate on the long-term vision for the charity.

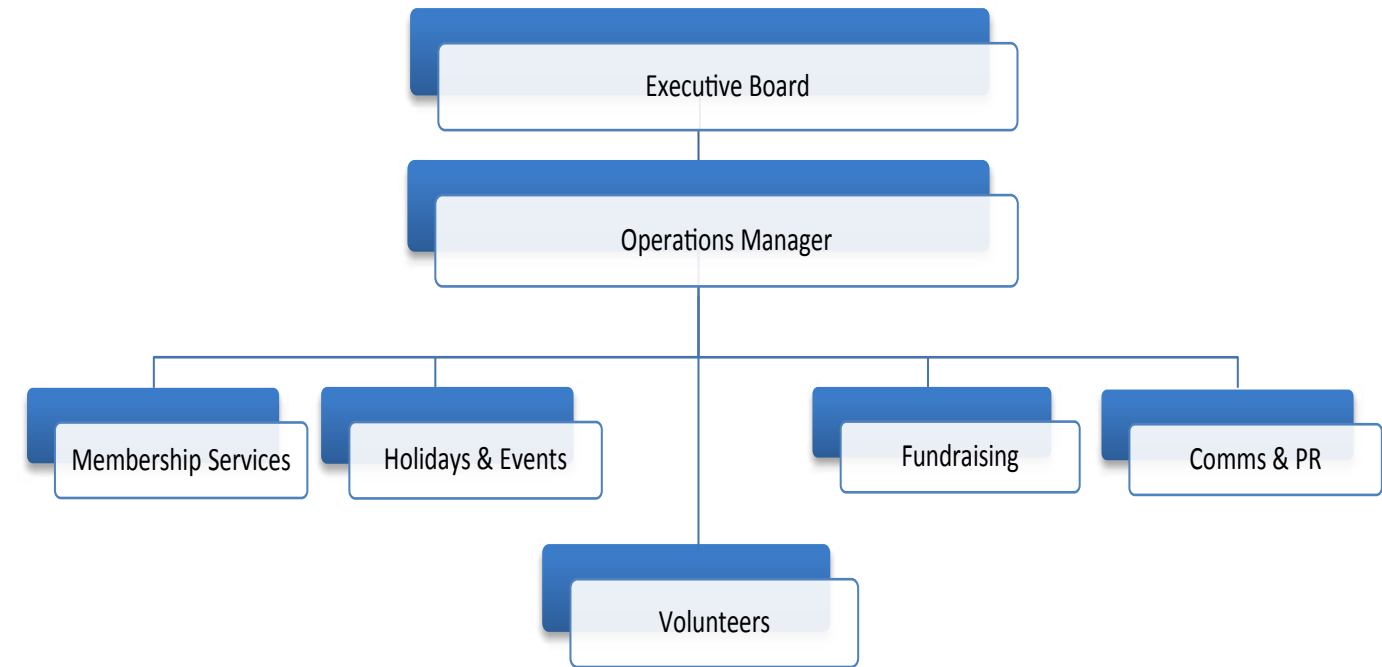
Headed by former Trustee Sarah Francis (Fundraising, Event Management, Volunteer coordination), the other members of the Operations Team in 2014 included part-time employee Gemma Greenbank (Membership, Admin, Data Protection) and Vicky Anning (Communications, Press Officer). Vicky has been editing WAY's newsletter on a freelance basis since 2009 and took on WAY's Press Officer role in 2014, after the previous Press Officer stood down.

Goals for the Operations Team include improving communication, both ways, within the membership and developing a proper fundraising strategy to make the most of funding opportunities and to try and create a steady stream of income for WAY to secure the charity's future. The Operations Manager is also responsible for improving systems for supporting the Area Contacts and other volunteers who are so vital to the successful running of WAY (see *Supporting Volunteers*, p18).

As the new website system and the new structure of WAY develops, the roles of the Operations Team may alter slightly, and new members will be added. Eventually we hope to have a large and efficient team in place that can help, advise and support the growing membership.

With this in mind, we decided to take on the lease of a small office in Derby for our Operations Team at the end of 2014, rather than continuing to pay mail forwarding costs from a post office box and relying on our team members to work from home-based premises. As well as being close to our web team at Binary Fold4, the new WAY office is centrally located in the country and includes a board meeting facility, which will help to reduce the costs of board meetings in future.

Here is how the new structure of WAY works:



## Meet WAY's Executive Board

The Executive Board met four times in 2014 to discuss governance issues and the strategic direction of WAY. Meet WAY's five trustees...

### Chairman: Georgia Elms

"I joined WAY in October 2006, four months after I was widowed aged 36 when my husband Jon (38) died suddenly from Meningitis – leaving me with 1-year-old Daisy. I found out the next day that I was pregnant.



The main reason I have been able to survive as a young widow has been through the support and reassurance I have received from other WAY members who I have met at local, national and even international events, as well as online. I joined the WAY committee in March 2009 and took on the role of Chairman in March 2010.

I wanted to give something back to the wonderful charity that had helped me so much. I hoped that I could use my skills from previous roles in large companies to ensure that everyone who was eligible to join knew about us and that WAY was able to be what it said it was. I also wanted to campaign on behalf of WAY to ensure that those who are widowed young are recognised and taken seriously."

### General Secretary: Ronnie Davidson

"I live in Glenrothes in Fife and work as a Production Manager for Progress Rail Services in Edinburgh. I lost my wife, Elaine, in December 2010 after a four and half year battle against bowel cancer. I came across WAY after meeting a friend in a supermarket who happened to know someone who was the local area coordinator of WAY. I joined WAY in 2011 and have made many new friends since then.



I found WAY by accident, and I know a lot of others did too. By taking on the role of General Secretary, I hope I can use my skills to give back something to WAY and can help it to expand and grow to allow others in our situations who have not yet found WAY to get the help, support and friendship that being a member of our wonderful charity can bring. And we need to help people find out about WAY by raising the awareness among the general public."

### Treasurer: Debbie Knivett

"Andy was diagnosed with stomach cancer in 2000 when I was pregnant with our first child. Our son Ben was born in December 2000 and Andy died in May 2002. I heard about WAY on the radio and joined the North East group although I was still in the South at the time but knew I was going to relocate. WAY provided me with the support of others who had been bereaved but also a social network when I had no friends in the area. I have been WAY's treasurer for four years now, and see it as a way of giving something back for the support I have found."



### Trustee: Gaynor Williams

"I was widowed in 2003 after my husband Ceri was knocked off his bike in a hit and run accident. I found out about WAY three years after Ceri died, quite by chance. I wish it had been sooner because the deep friendships I formed with some amazing people in the North East are helping me to this day. Eventually, I became an Area Contact and then a Committee member and in 2009 was instrumental in starting Way Up for the over 50s, which I still run with another WAY member. I believe that meeting, sharing and mutually supporting each other, especially face to face, is what makes WAY so special. Every young widow and widower in the UK should be able to have access to this kind of special support."



### Trustee: Justin Greenbank

"I joined WAY in 2007 after a counsellor recommended it to me. WAY has changed my life completely and I can hand on heart say that a majority of my best friends I have met through WAY. I joined the committee for the second time in 2013 because I liked the way it was moving forward. Lots has happened this year with the new website and the new structure within the executive board and I am really excited to see how we grow and develop. These are really exciting times for WAY and I am really proud to be part of that."



## Bringing WAY members together

### New Website

As well as unveiling WAY's new structure at our AGM in Peterborough in March, we also unveiled our new website in partnership with our new web team at BinaryFold4.

For the last three years, we have been working on a new online system for WAY that's designed as a one-stop shop for our members. This was made possible by a £15,000 grant from Victim Support and by generous donations from our members. The process has not been without its teething problems but we were delighted to be able to launch our new look website at the 2014 AGM.

The re-designed public website is now far easier to navigate and potential members can now join online, which has led to an increase in new members joining over the past year. Our 2014 Annual Survey revealed that more than one third of our members (34%) found WAY through Internet searches, so it's important that we continue to maintain a strong online presence to help more people find out about WAY.

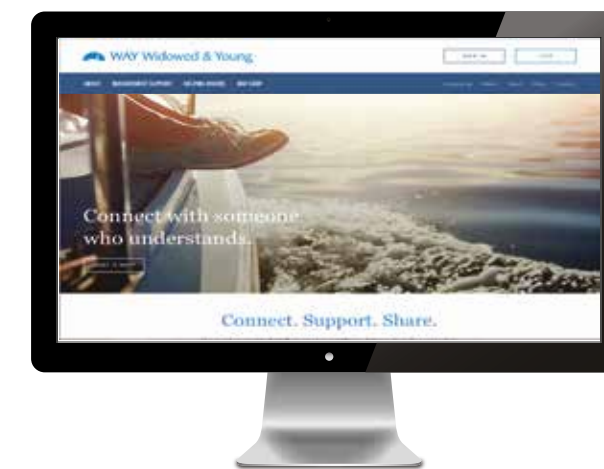
The new website is already having the desired effect. Between the launch of the new website on 8 March 2014 and 31 December 2014, we recorded 71,486 visits to the site, of which 31,199 were unique visitors (in other words, 40,287 visits were people coming back).

In May and June 2014, we recorded about 5,500 visits per month. By the end of 2014, we were averaging about 9,000 visits per month, which represents not far off a doubling in the number of visits in the six months since we relaunched the website in March.

The demographics report shows that 75% of visitors were female, 25% male, mainly between the ages of 35 and 54. This roughly reflects the demographics of our membership.

Through the new website, we also hope that WAY will come to be viewed as experts on widowhood, as well as a source for relatives and friends of people who have been widowed, particularly through the *Helping Others* and *Bereavement Support* sections.

We also have a new WAY online shop available through our website where people can buy WAY merchandise such as hoodies, wrist bands and stickers. See [www.widowedandyoung.org.uk](http://www.widowedandyoung.org.uk)



### Members Only Area

At the AGM, we also unveiled the new members only area of the website, which includes a whole array of new online facilities that is totally secure and only open to WAY members.

One of the things WAY's members appreciate most is being able to talk to others who have been through a similar situation. In fact, our 2014 Annual Survey found that 86% joined WAY to meet others in the same situation; 63% for support; 47% for friendship.

With this in mind, the new members only area includes an online chat room and forum that allows members to view topics by category, post messages and pictures, and send private messages to other members across the country. The final piece de resistance is the Events System, which allows anyone to post any event – from a meeting in a local coffee shop to a holiday.

Members can now book onto and pay for events such as the AGM through the members only area, making the administration much easier for our Operations Team. And WAY members can also now renew and manage their membership online. The system will now send out automated reminders to members reminding them that their membership is coming up for renewal, which we hope will improve our retention rate of members.

Our Executive Board has also been working on a revised Code of Conduct and complaints procedure to make sure that WAY continues to provide a safe and supportive environment for all our members, whether they meet in person or online. All of WAY's policies and procedures, as well as past Annual Reports and newsletters, are available in the *How WAY Works* section of our members only area, which includes a wealth of information for members about the charity and how it is run.

*"Just knowing there are others who really understand how you feel and truly want to know how you are makes getting through the day just a bit easier. It feels like a safety net, there if and when you need it."*



## Holidays & Events

There are lots of activities and events that WAY members can get involved with, either at a local or national level.

We have a network of 79 local Area Contacts who tirelessly organise dozens of events at a local level. Some areas of the country have more active local groups than others but all members can find other people who live near them through the new website, so they can always find someone to talk to or meet up with for a coffee or a drink.

Typical local events include pub evenings for adults, picnics and park days out with children, meals in restaurants and 'at home' evenings in members' houses where people can get to know other members in relaxed surroundings.

WAY and our members have also organised some very successful holidays and weekends away over the past few years, giving members the opportunity to take a break with people who understand just how hard it can be to go on holiday after the death of a partner.

Highlights during 2014 included two skiing trips in the French Alps at the beginning and end of the year, a children's activity weekend at Kingswood in South Yorkshire in February, a Father's Day trip to Dorset in June, a gathering at Comrie Croft in Scotland in August, and an annual trip to CenterParcs in Sherwood Forest in October, which attracted 400 WAY members and children.

WAY also organises an annual general meeting every March that's much more fun than it sounds! WAY's AGM is not just a business meeting to help plot the charity's future direction. It's also a chance for people to meet other members from up and down the country and to let their hair down in a safe and friendly environment.

Here's what one member said after our 2014 AGM in Peterborough, which was attended by more than 150 WAY members: *"I can honestly say my expectations of something that sounded incredibly boring were WAY out!!! The meeting was FAR from boring... I met some truly amazing people and made some lifelong friends. This was my first AGM but it won't be my last..."*

WAY's 2015 AGM is due to take place in Cardiff in March. As mentioned in the *New Website* section above, it is now far easier for members to organise both local and national events via our new members only area. We are optimistic that this new system will increase the number of events organised as well as increasing the number of members attending events in future.



## What WAY members got up to in 2014

There were weekends away and holidays for WAY members to take part in during nearly every month of 2014...

**January:** More than 50 WAY members and their children skied in the New Year in the French Alps

**February:** More than 160 WAY members and children went along to WAY's activity weekend for families and children at Kingswood in South Yorkshire

**February:** A group of 11 WAYers organised a trip to see the Northern Lights in Iceland

**March:** More than 150 WAY members attended our AGM in Peterborough in March 2014

**April:** A group of WAYers and their children travelled to Cyprus over Easter

**May:** More than 500 people attended WAY's Big Picnic events at 30 locations across the country in one weekend in May 2014

**June:** More than 70 WAY members and children marked Father's Day at Hoburne Park in Dorset

**July:** A group of WAYers went camping and caravanning in Derbyshire

**August:** More than 75 WAY member and children gathered at Comrie Croft in Scotland

**October:** More than 400 WAY members and children went to CenterParcs in Sherwood Forest

**October:** A group of 25 WAYers went walking in the Lake District

**November:** A group of 25 WAY members and children got together for a pre-Christmas weekend of reindeer-related activities in Aberfeldy, Scotland

**December:** 55 WAYers and their children waved goodbye to 2014 in the French Alps



## Big Picnic, Big Success

Following a successful trial in 2013, we have decided to make the Big Picnic into an annual national WAY event. Anyone is welcome to come along to a Big Picnic – which is essentially an 'open day' for WAY.

The fantastic weather helped to make the Big Picnic weekend during the weekend of 17/18 May 2014 a big success. More than 500 WAY members, friends and family turned up to eat cake, play Frisbee, release balloons, make friends and generally enjoy themselves at 30 different picnic spots across the country – from Dunfermline to Newquay.

*"It was great to see so many happy faces at the Big Picnic events," said WAY's Chair Georgia Elms. "And to know that WAY members across the country were getting together and having a great time in the sunshine."*



## Scaling new heights at Kingswood Activity Centre

When WAY member Martin Bayliss came along to WAY's AGM in Edinburgh in 2013, he was really impressed to hear about the first activity weekend WAY had run for parents and children at Bockleton, which was funded by the Comasonic Benevolent Fund. Martin decided to make a donation there and then so that children could go free to an activity weekend at Kingswood in South Yorkshire in February 2014. WAY's Press Officer Vicky Anning joined 160 WAY members and their kids as they learned the ropes...

"When I set off to Kingswood in Dearne Valley, I wasn't quite sure what to expect. While I'm up for most outdoor adventures, the prospect of high ropes and zip-wires made me feel distinctly nervous... After eight years of widowed life, there aren't many things that faze me. But I don't have much of a head for heights. And the idea of jumping off a very tall pole and see-sawing in high winds is not necessarily my idea of fun! A trait that my nine-year-old daughter Jenna seems to have inherited!

I needn't have worried. By the end of the first day, me and Jenna were harnessed up together and balancing precariously on stacks of crates as other WAY members piled fresh crates higher and higher over their heads, and under our feet. As darkness descended and the rain started to pour down, I clung onto Jenna for dear life. I realised that – for perhaps the first time in our lives – it was she who was supporting me. As the crates gave way under us, we both shrieked with a mixture of exhilaration and terror – and we were gradually lowered to the ground with our harnesses, our helmets, and our pride, intact.

For me, it was the ultimate moment of mother-daughter bonding. A subtle sign of the shifting dynamics in our relationship as she fast becomes a young woman in her own right. Having the harness around our waists offered us a sense of security – a kind of safety blanket – that gave us the courage to try things we might never have dared to do before. And we offered each other mutual support as equals in the face of new challenges!

Me and Jenna climbed the high ropes (OK, we only got to the first level, but we did it all the same!) And we climbed up the climbing wall (again, we didn't get very far – but seeing the enthusiastic way that Jenna set off up the vertical incline gave me a renewed respect for my daughter.) We didn't quite have the stomach for the zip-wire, but we learned how to fight each other with foils in fencing, we learned how to make fire from flints, I ate a raw nettle (!) and we worked in teams to guide each other in blind folds along narrow beams...

It was a fantastic weekend – and it really allowed me to spend some proper time with Jenna, and to see sides of her that I'd never seen before. We met some great people. There was lots of laughter, as well as a few tears. There were birthday candles. And a disco. And perhaps the biggest treat of all for me was that all the food was provided. For once, we lone parents didn't have to worry about any cooking, shopping or washing up. We could just focus on enjoying ourselves. Stepping outside our daily lives for a while... And spending time with our kids...

In some ways, the safety harness we had to wear on the high ropes was like a metaphor for the support WAY has offered me and Jenna over the last eight years – encouraging us to do things we have never done before. From jumping down water flumes at CenterParcs to releasing balloons with other WAY kids on Father's Day, we have done things that we might never have imagined... We have made lots of new friends along the way. Some of them will no doubt be around to offer support and advice for many years to come. They are like our very own safety harness – offering us a lifeline when the going gets tough.

Going to Kingswood reminded me just how crucial that support can be – no matter how far along you are in your journey. It was fantastic to see so many happy faces. And to see so many people conquering their fears and trying new things."

Vicky



## Our Kingswood quest

A poem by 9-year-old Jenna

My favourite was the high ropes  
It was very scary but we had to have hope  
I climbed as high as the beam  
Though I had the urge to scream  
I carried on skyward  
On, on upwards...  
Fencing was hard and tiring  
But also it was very inspiring.  
Meeting new people was great  
And we even clambered up on top of some crazy crates.  
That was the best holiday ever  
And will be in my memory forever!  
Kingswood, the best  
We completed our quest...



## Raising Funds for WAY

WAY receives no government funding and depends on membership fees and fundraising activities to keep the charity going.

One of the key responsibilities of the Operations Manager in 2014 was to focus on raising funds for WAY to secure the long-term future of the charity. With this in mind, our Operations Team sent off applications to 800 grant-making trusts and foundations during the course of 2014. We have so far received replies from approximately 100 of these organisations, with four donating to our general funds totalling £6,500 (with thanks to the Winton Charitable Foundation, the David and Claudia Harding Foundation, the Pennycress Trust and Ladbrokes in the Community Charitable Trust). We have got through to the next funding round for several organisations and we are waiting to hear from others.

We also took the decision to increase our membership fee for members joining WAY or renewing their membership to £25 per year from September 2014 (from £15 per year). This is the first time we have put fees up for more than ten years and was a necessary step to help cover the growing costs of running the charity. Quite simply, the membership fee was not covering our costs effectively, which meant that fundraising by members was supporting the membership fee. If WAY is to survive for the long term, the membership fee needs to pay for our costs, with fundraising enabling us to do extra things.

Our new online shop has raised nearly £2,000 for WAY in 2014 and we are also looking at other ways of generating funds. For example, in 2014 we set up a new business directory for WAY members to advertise their businesses to other members through our *WAY Forward* printed newsletter and our members' only website. In time, we hope that this will generate enough revenue to cover some of our printing costs.

Once again, our members were extremely generous in pledging their time and money to raise funds for WAY during 2014. In fact, more than £23,000 was raised during the year for WAY, including donations from our members for our new website and for our Kingswood activity weekend in February (see *Holidays & Events*, p10).

Some of WAY's fundraising highlights of 2014 include:

- Sarah Wilkinson's hair-raising challenge at the 2014 AGM – which raised more than £2,550 for WAY
- Andrew Nex's double marathon challenge – which raised more than £3,556 for WAY and Cancer Research UK
- Beatles Birthday Bash by Candi Sweeney – raised £805
- Aj McNulty, who shaved her hair off at CenterParcs in October, raised more than £2,175 for WAY
- WAY wedding donations – WAY members Martin and Jane Bayliss raised more than £700 for WAY by asking for donations in lieu of presents to celebrate their marriage
- Sarah Jowsey raised £265 for WAY by taking part in her first ever Tough Mudder Challenge

"Today I did my first *Tough Mudder*. It was one of the best things I've ever done. I've been raising money for WAY, whose members have saved my life and given me the mind set to know that I can live a happy life and that I am strong enough to accomplish anything I set my mind to. Thank you to everyone who has played a part in my journey."

**Sarah Jowsey**



### Sarah Wilkinson: A Hair-raising Challenge

WAY's amazing Holiday Coordinator Sarah Wilkinson decided to mark the end of her four years on the WAY Committee by shaving all her hair off at our 2014 AGM to raise funds for WAY!

Originally, Sarah pledged to shave all her hair if she raised more than £1,500. But as the challenge gathered momentum, Sarah raised her fundraising target to £1,750 and then to £2,000. In the end, she raised more than £2,500! And true to her word, she boldly went where no WAY committee member had gone before by shaving all her hair off in front of 160 cheering members at the WAY AGM in Peterborough. And she looked amazing too!

Sarah decided to reveal her scalp to the world in memory of her late husband Jason – aka "Baldie" – who was killed in an accident at work when he was just 33 years old.

WAY quickly became a lifeline for Sarah after her husband was killed in a work accident in 2005. She became an Area Contact for Oxfordshire from 2008 to 2014 – throwing herself with enthusiasm into the role of local events organiser for local members. And she joined the former WAY committee in March 2010.

As Holiday Coordinator, Sarah helped to organise dozens of trips for members up and down the country – including the recent activity weekend for members and their kids at Kingswood as well as trips adults-only trips to Blackpool and Bournemouth.

As her final swan song, Sarah organised a Father's Day trip for around 50 members to Dorset in June. Now, she is planning to put her feet up for a while!



### Andrew Nex: A Marathon Effort for WAY

Oxfordshire WAY member Andy Nex raised a staggering £3,556 for WAY and Cancer Research UK by running in two back-to-back marathons in April and May – both in less than four hours.

"WAY has been a lifeline to me in the three years I've been a member," he says. "Being widowed in your 30s, as I was, even with wonderful supportive friends and family, it's easy to feel isolated and like a freak – like nobody understands what you're going through."

WAY allowed me to contact people who really do understand. We help one another out through social events, holidays and online forums, and we have a lot of fun. It's great for the kids too, who can also make friends who really get where they're coming from."



### How you can help raise funds for WAY:

If you would like to help raise funds for WAY's work to support people who have been widowed at a young age, there are lots of ways you can help – even if you're not up to running a marathon!

Did you know you can order bags to recycle your unwanted clothes through Clothes for Charity with the funds going to WAY?

Or you can buy hoodies and other goodies at our online WAY shop at [www.shop.widowedandyoung.org.uk](http://www.shop.widowedandyoung.org.uk)

Or you can raise money for WAY while you shop at your favourites stores by signing up via [www.giveasyoulive.com/join/way](http://www.giveasyoulive.com/join/way)

We are also encouraging members and their friends and family to set up online online pages for any fundraising activities via Virginmoneygiving.com, which allows people to raise funds for several different charities at the same time. This means that they can raise funds for WAY while raising funds for other charities.

Find out how you can help to raise funds for WAY's vital work supporting people who have been widowed young at [www.widowedandyoung.org.uk/fundraising](http://www.widowedandyoung.org.uk/fundraising).



## Getting the Word out about WAY – Communications

With almost 1,400 members across the country, it's crucial to WAY that we keep everyone connected with each other – as well as keeping everyone in the loop about what's going on across the organisation, from events happening at a local level to decisions made at the AGM.

We have four ways of communicating with our members, including our new website:

- We send out our printed *WAY Forward* newsletter three times a year (spring, autumn and winter)
- We send out a monthly enewsletter to all members
- We post information on our Facebook closed group and on our public Facebook page, as well as on our Twitter feed (@WidowedandYoung)
- And, as everyone settles into the new members only site, we will be posting more information about what's going on locally and nationally via our members only area too, as well as posting more information about events (see *New Website* section, p9). Eventually, our members only forum will replace our closed Facebook group, which is more difficult for us to monitor and administrate.

In 2014, we also launched a regular Friends of WAY enewsletter for people who are interested in WAY's work. By the end of 2014, nearly 700 Friends of WAY had signed up to receive this enewsletter. We also post regular news updates on the *News* pages of our public website to keep non-members up to date about what's going in with WAY.

For the past six years, WAY member Vicky Anning has been editing our printed magazine *WAY Forward*, which is sent out to all members each quarter by post. Since 2012, she has also been writing and editing our monthly enewsletter, which goes out to members via email.

In 2014, after our previous voluntary press officer stood down, it was decided to offer Vicky Anning the role of WAY's press officer on a freelance basis. This investment has paid off in terms of the amount of press coverage WAY has garnered in 2014, which is helping us to spread the word about WAY to a wider audience.

WAY and our members were featured in 20 articles in high-quality national newspapers or magazines in 2014 (from *The Guardian* to *Good Housekeeping*), as well as appearing in six local newspapers (from the *Birmingham Mail* to the *South Wales Echo*) and in four online articles (*Parentdish*, *Mumsnet*, *Telegraph Online* and *Belle About Town*).



WAY members were also interviewed on nine radio shows in 2014, from BBC Radio Bristol to Radio 5 Live and were filmed for a BBC TV documentary due to screen in Scotland in March 2015. One of our members was also interviewed for TV about the issue of digital legacies on BBC Reporting Scotland.



### Highlights of WAY's 2014 media coverage

- One of our members was featured in the May issue of *Good Housekeeping* and another member was featured in the Christmas issue.
- We had extensive coverage for WAY around Father's Day in June – including articles featuring WAY fathers in the *Mirror*, *Telegraph* online and *Sunday Herald*.
- In August, we also had a double-page spread in the *Sunday Mail* featuring WAY member Tom Chetwynd, which helped to raise the sensitive issue of post-natal depression.
- Several of our members were featured in an article about being widowed young by Joanna Moorhead in the June issue of *Reader's Digest*.
- One of our members who has been widowed twice was featured in *The Guardian's* family section in September.
- Dear Deidre mentioned WAY twice during 2014 in her advice column in the *Sun*.
- WAY members were featured in magazines including *Prima*, *Stylist*, *Pick Me Up*, *Fabulous*, *Woman's Own*, *Take a Break* and *Woman's Weekly*.
- WAY's Chair was quoted and one of our members was interviewed for a feature about the Widowed Parent's Allowance in the *Sunday Times* in October.

You can see all WAY's latest media coverage on the news page of our website at [www.widowedandyoung.org.uk/news](http://www.widowedandyoung.org.uk/news)



## Reaching out to new members

Our 2014 Annual Survey showed that 12% of our members found WAY through media coverage and we would like to continue to reach out to new audiences by working with sensitive journalists to place stories about WAY and our members in high quality publications with as broad a reach as possible. We would also like to increase our coverage about WAY at a local level, for example, by reaching out more proactively to local media during the Big Picnic weekend in May.

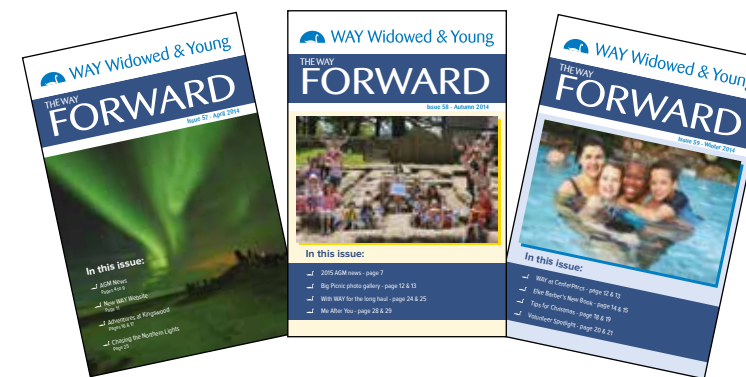
We are also looking proactively at other ways of spreading the word about WAY and have had articles featured in other organisations' newsletters, including the following:

- In January, an article in the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) newsletter included an interview with WAY's Chair Georgia Elms. This goes out to cemetery and crematorium managers across the UK. We also included leaflets about WAY that could be left at strategic locations at cemeteries and crematoria.
- WAY was featured in Care for the Family's enewsletter
- WAY was featured in RoadPeace's newsletter
- WAY was featured in Mesothelioma UK newsletter (which goes out to 2,000 people in hard copy and 1,000 people online)
- There was also an article about WAY in the Institute of Welfare's May magazine, which goes out to 1,000 members involved in counselling and guidance
- WAY was mentioned in Bowel Cancer UK's enewsletter, which goes out to nurses involved in colo-rectal care.

Three WAY members also published books in 2014 about being widowed at a young age:

- Lifeasawidower blogger Benjamin Brooks-Dutton brought out *It's Not Raining Daddy, It's Happy*
- Wife After Death blogger Lucie Brownlee wrote *Me After You*
- Maddy Paxman brought out *The Great Below*.

Each of these authors mentioned WAY within their books and/or in press coverage about their books, which also helped more new members to find out about WAY. (For example, 19 members in our 2014 Annual Survey said they had found out about WAY through reading a book – nine of those through Lucie Brownlee's book alone).

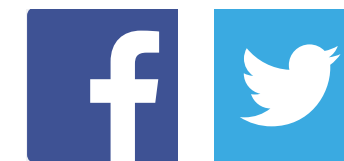


## Social Media

We also increased WAY's social media presence during 2014 by getting involved in topical debates and promoting our own achievements (and the achievements of our members) more pro-actively.

WAY had attracted more than 1,000 Twitter followers by the end of 2014 and we had more than 2,500 followers on our public Facebook page by the end of the year. The reach of our posts via social media is potentially enormous – for example, our post sharing Ben Brooks-Dutton's blog about Peaches Geldof's death had 13,420 views – which is a cost-effective way to reach out to potential new members and to raise the profile of WAY among new audiences.

We will continue to look at new ways to improve our communication with members in 2015, as well as making the most of opportunities to reach out to potential new members through social media and traditional media whenever the opportunity arises.



## Supporting Volunteers

WAY is a peer-to-peer organisation and the charity simply could not function without all the wonderful volunteers across the country who give up their valuable time to help our organisation to run – from the 79 Area Contacts who run local WAY groups to the members who give up their time to organise events such as Kingswood and the Big Picnic events.

Our Operations Manager worked hard to put support mechanisms in place for volunteers in 2014, and this is an area that we are looking to develop further in 2015. However, we are aware that this is a very big project. As the Operations Team develops in the future, we are planning to try and improve communications and the level of support for volunteers. One of the first commitments made is to work together to produce a handbook to support Area Contacts in their role.

### Calling time on WAY's Telephone Team

In 2014, the Trustees made the difficult decision to pull the plug on WAY's Telephone Team. We needed to ensure that the service we provided was suitable, of the highest possible standard and was also cost effective.

In the past, Telephone Team members provided answers to all kinds of membership enquiries, directing people to other sources and resources, as well as carrying out some counselling, usually in the form of listening.

However, some team members have been exposed to some very difficult situations, such as threatening behaviour, angry calls including verbal abuse and also very distressed callers threatening self harm or even suicide. Our volunteers were sometimes exposed to more risk and upset than is reasonable to expect.

After discussion with several bereavement counsellors and other professionals, we realised that the telephone counselling role was beyond WAY's remit as a peer-to-peer support network. We recognised it would be too expensive for us to provide a professional bereavement counselling service, with all the training, mentoring and support for advisers that would entail. In future, we would prefer to refer people to experts such as Cruse for bereavement counselling.

The Trustees also felt that the new website would now be able to respond to some of the questions that the Telephone Team used to handle – via a Frequently Asked Questions page. There will also be an answer phone message referring people to our website.

We will continue to review the new arrangements to make sure they are meeting the needs of members – and prospective members.

### The Mandy Burrows Memorial Award

At the 2014 AGM, WAY launched The Mandy Burrows Memorial Award for outstanding contribution to WAY in order to recognise the achievements of some of our volunteers.

The Award was launched in memory of one of our members, Amanda Burrows (née Hansen), who died on 5 January 2014.

Mandy had joined WAY in 2012 after losing her husband Phil in October 2011 to leukaemia. Members will be able to nominate worthy WAY member via our website, and the first recipient of this award will be announced at the AGM in Cardiff in March 2015.

### Volunteer in the Spotlight

Rhona Bain joined WAY in Nov 2007 after her husband of 17 years, Brian, died of a heart attack. She was 42 at the time and her two boys were 9 and 12. She found out about WAY through a chance meeting with a member at Crieff Hydro where she was taken by her parents for a holiday just six weeks after Brian died. She got so much out of meeting up with her local group that she became a joint Area Contact for WAY in Central Scotland five years ago. She was a primary school teacher but after a career break she resigned from teaching and became self employed and now teaches music to babies and toddlers. Rhona is also joint organiser of the annual Comrie Croft weekend in Scotland in September. Here's what she has to say about being a WAY volunteer...



"I really enjoy the job of Area Contact. Although it can be quite hard work at times the rewards are well worth the effort. It is just so good to hear a new member saying how much they have got out of coming to a meet up and speaking to people who really understand or when we put two members in touch with each other because they have something in common.

We try and plan two events a month and usually more in the holidays. We do children's events from time to time too. I can thoroughly recommend being a WAY volunteer and it is good to know you are giving a little back to a group that has given you so much."



## Campaigning for Change

WAY has increased its campaigning activities over 2014 and has been invited to several high-profile meetings as a result. The importance of our campaigning in areas such as benefits reform is vital in times of huge social change, in order to make sure the welfare of young widows is protected now and in the future. Our work with other organisations in this arena also helps to raise our visibility as a charity.

Working together with the Child Bereavement Network, we have been campaigning against proposed changes to the Widowed Parents' Allowance (WPA), which are due to come into effect in April 2017. In October, WAY's Chair Georgia Elms was interviewed alongside one of our members about the impact of the proposed changes in a high-profile article in the *Sunday Times*.

As a result of all WAY's hard work in this area, Georgia has been invited to be part of a working party to look at whether conditionality (when someone who is not working and who is claiming Universal Credit has to show that they are actively looking for a job) can be relaxed in the short term if they can prove that their children will be further distressed following bereavement if their surviving parent has to go out to work. This is a small concession by the government as they have ignored our request to allow unmarried parents to claim WPA and for the term of payment to be longer than 12 months after April 2017. We will continue to do what we can to campaign against these proposed changes, which we believe will adversely affect parents who are widowed after April 2017.

In June, Georgia also attended a conference run by the new Chief Coroner about changes to the way inquests are run and managed in future. The changes that were announced will make the whole experience of inquests far better and hopefully less stressful for the families involved. A WAY member with experience of inquests attended the meeting alongside Georgia and has offered to help other WAY members who have to attend an inquest in future. We have set up a thread dedicated to inquests on our members only forum. And WAY is also liaising with the Coroners' Courts Support Services (CCCS) to see how we can work together in future to make inquests less intimidating for WAY members.

One of WAY's members was also invited to contribute to a new set of guidelines to help bereaved people in the workplace that were unveiled in the autumn. Louise Smith from Oxfordshire was also invited along to the House of Commons launch of the guidelines, which were developed jointly by Cruse and the conciliation service Acas and other key bereavement organisations.

"Research has shown that nearly a third of employees who have suffered a bereavement in the past five years felt that they have not been treated with compassion by their employer," says Louise. "I have seen so many comments on the WAY forums which corroborate that this has indeed been the case for so many of us."

"The new guidelines give the advice to employers and managers in a helpful and straightforward manner, and communicate what to do when an employee is bereaved – from taking the first call, through to helping the employee return to work and providing on-going support. The guidelines include advice for managers on how to get the balance right in order to be supportive, compassionate, flexible and practical towards employees who have been bereaved."

For more information visit [www.cruse.org.uk/news/bereavement-at-work](http://www.cruse.org.uk/news/bereavement-at-work).



## Income and Expenditure

The accounts for 2014 show a deficit for the second year in a row, this time of £11,000. However, this is not surprising given the investment in the ongoing development of the new website with BinaryFold4. There is a further £6,000 payment due to BinaryFold4, which will be paid when the final elements of the new website are in place. At the time of writing, these should be installed before the March 2015 AGM in Cardiff.

Expenditure on the database last year was mitigated by a donation from a member of £15,000, whereas this year the expenditure has been partly offset by increased fundraising activity from the membership. This is detailed in the fundraising section of this report.

The level of subscriptions and renewals has and will improve with the ease of joining online and with automated renewal of membership. Previously renewal of membership was through Just Giving, which automatically claim Gift Aid on our behalf. Now that all transactions are through Paypal we will need to apply to claim Gift Aid. There is already some Gift Aid outstanding on payments made through cheques and directly into the bank so it will be a key objective of the Operations Team to make a Gift Aid claim in 2015.

Expenditure on staff costs has increased with the employment of a part-time Operations Manager during 2014. We are currently looking to extend this role so this cost will increase further in 2015.

As well as a part-time Membership Manager, the other paid member of the Operations Team is our Newsletter Editor and Press Officer (who works on a freelance basis). Those costs are included within the Advertising & Promotion costs. In 2013, we were employing Marketsquare to do some PR work for us, so the year on year cost increase is not great.

Last year we also had the costs of the NCVO review of the corporate structure, and the funding of picnic baskets and the like for the first Big Picnic. Neither of these costs has been incurred in 2014.

## Balance Sheet

At the end of 2014 the balance sheet shows a surplus of £48,000. At the end of 2012 we had a surplus of £81,000, so we have depleted our resources by £33,000 in two years. As a Charity, we are expected to spend any money we receive, so we do not want to have significant reserves. However, we do need to be mindful of our ongoing liabilities and responsibilities.

Typically we would look to hold one years' worth of the costs of our member of staff. At the end of 2014, we took on an office space in Derby and we are looking to recruit an Operations Manager for more days a week in 2015. It looks like we need to retain in the region of £35,000 to provide for this. Although we are showing a surplus of £48,000, we owe BinaryFold4 £6,000 and we have yet to pay for the AGM in Cardiff, for which we have deposits in the accounts of £12,000. We will need to keep a careful eye on cashflow during 2015 to monitor this situation.

### Accounts to the end of December 2014 (unaudited) INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

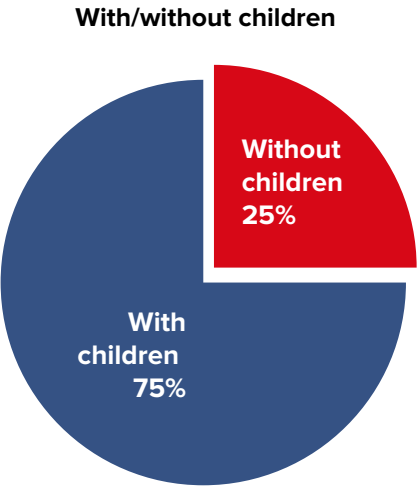
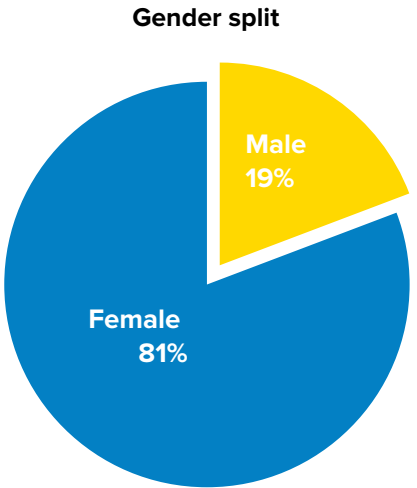
|                                           | 2014             | 2013             |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
|                                           | £                | £                |
| <b>Income</b>                             |                  |                  |
| From members                              | 29,906           | 20,921           |
| Donations - General                       | 13,727           | 15,899           |
| Donations - New Database                  |                  | 15,000           |
| Fundraising - New Database                | 615              | 1,984            |
| Fundraising                               | 8,897            | 5,636            |
| Merchandise                               | 1,884            | 575              |
| Bank Interest                             | 199              | 938              |
| Gift Aid                                  | 3,127            | 7,182            |
| AGM 2015                                  | 12,265           |                  |
| AGM 2014                                  | 13,270           | 11,145           |
| AGM 2013                                  |                  | 10,419           |
| Holidays                                  | 10,814           | 12,954           |
| <b>TOTAL INCOME</b>                       | <b>94,704</b>    | <b>102,653</b>   |
| <b>Expenditure</b>                        | <b>£</b>         | <b>£</b>         |
| Telecoms and Website                      | (2,132)          | (4,430)          |
| Advertising and promotion                 | (14,182)         | (16,162)         |
| NCVO                                      | (687)            | (4,266)          |
| Postage                                   | (2,172)          | (1,730)          |
| Staff Costs - Administration              | (10,760)         | (12,028)         |
| Staff Costs - Operations Manager          | (13,891)         | (745)            |
| Committee expenses                        | (1,558)          | (2,241)          |
| Merchandise                               | (2,592)          | (5,299)          |
| Fundraising - Grant Applications          | (823)            | (428)            |
| Big Picnic                                |                  | (3,962)          |
| Holidays                                  | (13,941)         | (21,720)         |
| AGM 2015                                  | (591)            |                  |
| AGM 2014                                  | (19,159)         | (328)            |
| AGM 2013                                  |                  | (30,691)         |
| Database                                  | (20,853)         | (18,876)         |
| Bank Charges                              | (48)             | (59)             |
| Insurance                                 | (449)            | (449)            |
| Audit fees                                | (60)             | (60)             |
| Fees                                      | (1,898)          | (1,334)          |
| <b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>                  | <b>(105,795)</b> | <b>(124,806)</b> |
| <b>Net (deficit)/surplus for the year</b> | <b>(11,091)</b>  | <b>(22,153)</b>  |

### Accounts to the end of December 2014 (Unaudited) BALANCE SHEET

|                                     | 2014          | 2013          |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
|                                     | £             | £             |
| <b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>               |               |               |
| Lloyds Bank Current Account         | 3,197         | 23,800        |
| Less Uncleared (Cheques)/Credits    |               | (6,547)       |
|                                     | 3,197         | 17,253        |
| Co-Operative Bank Current Account   | 6,400         | 28,924        |
| Less Uncleared (Cheques)/Credits    | 38,171        | 2,679         |
|                                     | 44,571        | 31,603        |
| Paypal                              |               |               |
| Principality Fixed Term Deposits    |               | 10,000        |
| <b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>                 | <b>47,768</b> | <b>58,856</b> |
| <b>FINANCED BY:</b>                 |               |               |
| Accumulated Surplus Brought Forward | 58,855        | 81,009        |
| Net (Deficit)/Surplus for the Year  | (11,091)      | (22,153)      |
|                                     | <b>47,765</b> | <b>58,855</b> |



At the end of 2014, WAY had a total of 1,381 members. The breakdown of the membership is shown below:



This 2014 total appears to be smaller than our 2013 membership figure (which was 1,513). This is in spite of the fact that 849 new members joined WAY in 2014 (up from 592 in 2013). In fact, as already mentioned above, there was a notable increase in members joining WAY as soon as online joining became available. On average we used to get 10 to 12 new members joining every week and this has increased to approximately 17 to 20 new members joining every week since May 2014.

However, in spite of this increase in new members, the apparent drop in the overall total number of members can be explained by the fact that 430 lapsed WAY members who had not paid their subscription for some time were removed from the membership database at the end of 2014.

As we reported in our 2013 Annual Report, exact membership numbers were difficult to verify before the new website was introduced, particularly as we tended not to remove members from the database as soon as their membership had lapsed. Members were traditionally allowed a period of grace before their membership was suspended.

In the past, WAY had no automatic system to ensure that members renewed their membership or were removed from the database in a timely manner. However, the new website and associated online database has provided us with the mechanism to capture members' details more effectively and to manage our membership process more efficiently. After several reminders, we removed 430 lapsed members from the database, meaning that our total membership figure of 1,381 now only includes fully paid up WAY members.

Going forward, the new system allows us to automate membership renewal and also allows members to renew online via the website, rather than through Just Giving or by cheque, as happened in the past. We are able to send out a reminder message automatically to members one month before their membership lapses and then send them a series of reminders before their membership is suspended.

The new automated system will allow us to capture our membership data more efficiently and to measure our impact more effectively. We hope that members will also find it easier to renew their membership through the new system in future. In 2014, 550 paid up members did not renew their membership, which is a similar pattern seen in previous years.

Retaining existing members and recruiting new members is a high priority for WAY if we are to meet our ambitious 2020 Vision targets (see p23).

The headline goal for WAY is to have 20,000 members by the year 2020.

To achieve this, the strategy developed by the Executive Board was split into short-term, medium-term and long-term goals. In order to progress towards our 2020 Vision, years 2015, 2016 and 2017 are based on increasing awareness of the charity and improving services offered to the membership.

| Short-term Goals |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2015             | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Membership to understand the new structure of the management of the Charity; this to include the Trustee Board, Operations Team and the role of volunteers.</li><li>2. Membership retention of 75%.</li><li>3. Work out how best to support the role of volunteers within the charity and produce guidelines for the team; this to include WAY values.</li><li>4. Arranging of 4 regional volunteer meetings with the Operations Team to discuss issues and share best practice.</li><li>5. Plan for a WAY conference in 2016, approximately six months after the AGM for topics that time at the AGM does not allow.</li><li>6. Membership goal for the end of 2015 to be 2,000 members with a push target of 2,500 members.</li><li>7. Policies and procedures to be updated to ensure they are fit for purpose and in line with the ethos of the charity.</li><li>8. Review and develop membership events, for example the Big Picnic, Father's Day weekend and the Scottish Weekend. How these current models for these events could be expanded to cover different parts of the country to offer them to more of the membership. This to include external funding of events.</li></ol> |
| 2016             | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Hold the first WAY conference.</li><li>2. Plan and develop two conferences for 2017.</li><li>3. Plan the 20 year anniversary events for WAY.</li><li>4. Membership target of 5,000 members.</li><li>5. Continue to develop the four volunteer meetings.</li><li>6. Increase the Operations Team by addition of a full time Fundraising/Events Manager. Apply for funding from external sources to this post.</li></ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 2017             | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. 20th year anniversary celebrations.</li><li>2. Increase membership to 8,000.</li></ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |



# WAY Widowed & Young

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Chair: Georgia Elms  
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Find WAY on Facebook  
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Photographs generously supplied by WAY members including Sharon Whitehead and Paul Stoodley