

WAY – Widowed And Young

Annual Report 2013

Charity ID: 1072649



WAY – WIDOWED AND YOUNG

Annual Report 2013

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Principal Activities

WAY was formed in 1997, with the intention of supporting those widowed young (aged 50 or under) and to promote the plight of young widows to a wider audience.

To achieve this WAY provides:

- A public website with guidance for members on getting through the first stages of bereavement and how their friends and relatives can help;
- A public presence on Social Media to provide up-to-date information on WAY and current issues;
- Many opportunities for members to meet others in the same situation, either face to face through organised meetings, or online;
- 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.



Within this report the major issues and achievements of the year will be described as well as looking at the general financial position of the charity and fund raising activities for the year.

Letter from the Chairman

This has been another busy but challenging year for WAY. In March we held our AGM North of the border in Edinburgh, which (despite initial reservations) turned out to be our biggest and best attended AGM weekend to date. Our Scottish members are always greatly supportive of WAY events, and some travel for hours to attend all over the country, so it was great to be able to bring the party to them and we greatly enjoyed their hospitality. In May we trialled a nationwide event called The Big Picnic, with the aim to involve as many members as possible across the country, reach out to potential members and the general public too. It was a great success, despite the weather in some parts of the country, with over 30 picnics organised, attended and enjoyed by hundreds of members. We also gained new members as a direct result of holding these public events, so we have decided to ensure this is an annual event in the WAY calendar.

By far the biggest challenge in 2013 has been the problems with the planned website. We were unfortunately let down by Acid Yellow, the company that we had instructed to develop the new website and online membership system. Many hours of precious Trustee volunteer time was wasted this year on trying to sort the problems this created. Once we realised that it was not going to work out, we then had to make the difficult decision to break all ties with Acid Yellow and write off the money that we had already spent with them. We then had the additional challenge of raising funds to start again; along with finding another supplier that we felt could achieve our aims. I was overwhelmed and touched that a WAY member personally donated £15,000 to the fund and other members also contributed to the online appeal totalling an additional £2595.00.

After careful deliberation, the Trustees appointed another Website Design Company in November who are making great progress with restarting the site with a view to launch at the 2014 AGM. The coming year will be dedicated to developing our online system to its full potential which we know will change the face and organisation of WAY. I believe that BinaryFold4, the company we have chosen to do this, can create the system we are looking for to streamline our

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communications, improve the joining and renewal process, and enhance the user experience for all our members.

The other big change that we will implement in the coming year came from the Trustee and Governance training day with the NCVO that we held in September. We spent 2 days with a charity consultant, who helped us realise exactly what the roles and responsibilities of a Trustee should be, how we could restructure the organisation of the charity to ensure we operated more effectively, and how we could best meet our legal obligations as set out by the Charities Commission. It was decided to create a smaller cohesive Board of Trustees to focus on Strategy and Governance issues, with an Operations Team headed up by a paid Operations Manager to oversee the day-to-day running of the charity. The Executive Board believes that this structure will work more efficiently to the benefit of WAY and our members, whilst supporting the volunteers we rely on so much to help run the organisation. It will also enable the Trustees to develop a long term strategic plan to ensure the longevity of the charity, retain existing members and to reach out to potential members who need the support we offer.

WAY has not changed very much at all over the last 10 years. Membership has remained static at around 1500 members and the issues that affect membership have remained the same. This organisational change and a focused approach to formulating a plan for the future will ensure WAY can develop, in a changing climate, to be the charity that our members and future members deserve and need.

As well as leading internal changes that affect our members, I have been campaigning with the Childhood Bereavement Network and other bereavement charities this year against the proposed changes to Widowed Parents' Allowance. This has involved many WAY members writing to their MPs, as well as feeding into an official consultation document. As a result of our input, we are hopeful that there will be some changes to the proposed bill, which will be heard in parliament during 2014.

Mrs Georgia Elms – Chairman

Organisation and Governance

The WAY Committee had 13 elected members in 2013 who met four times in the year, including the AGM.

There is a network of Area co-ordinators supporting the members, with the aim of covering all areas of the country including Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, plus a telephone team working on a rota basis answering calls from the public and members requiring information or help.

All roles within the charity, apart from one part-time administrative post, are still currently voluntary. It has become more and more apparent throughout the year that we are struggling to cope with this present situation. Therefore, following on from our Governance review with the NCVO, we will implement major organisational changes throughout 2014.

This will begin by trialling the post of a paid Operations Manager, starting in January 2014 on a part time basis, who will oversee all the day-to-day running tasks for WAY. They will support the other staff and volunteers, and apply for grants and funding until such a time that a dedicated fundraising position is possible. We will also fund the post of a part time Press Officer to ensure more people who need the support of the charity hear about us.

The committee will be much smaller from the next AGM, as those who wish to resign from their trustee position will not be replaced. In the past, members 'joined the committee' as a way of helping in a practical sense, such as being in charge of holiday and event organisation for example, although as we discovered at the NCVO training day this is not the ideal way to go about this, and it has been to the detriment of the long term direction of WAY.

It is hoped that these changes will ensure Trustees have the time to properly concentrate on strategic and governance issues, which will be much more easily discussed and decided within a smaller group.

2013 Achievements

Support Network:

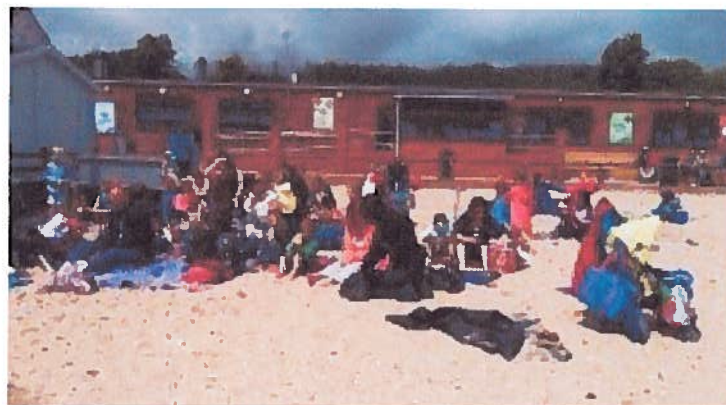
There is now a large online support network on our private Facebook groups, which can have its challenges for the volunteers who administrate it, but on the whole is seen as a useful networking tool by the membership.

Whilst the Regional Co-ordinator network to support the Area Contacts didn't work as planned, we continue to do our best to support all our volunteers and will carry on exploring other options to do this better.

Holidays:

Holidays, without a doubt, have a significant impact on those members attending. They benefit greatly from knowing they are going to be with others in the same situation that may also be going away for the first time since their partner died, and understand that among all the enjoyment, there will be times where some time-out is needed. We find that members who attend holidays and overnight events come away with lasting friendships and increased confidence to reintegrate back into society when they return.

There are now some regular holidays that our members organise each year, including an annual ski trip in France and the Whinfell Forest Center Parcs weekend in January. Father's Day events in Dorset and Ashbourne during June, plus the Center Parcs Sherwood Forest weekend at the end of October. This event continues to be the biggest that we hold with over 400 members attending from all over the country. The Scottish Way weekend in September was again held in Pitlochry, with plenty of other events and holidays arranged in between.



Long term development for WAY

Way Website:

Following a half-hearted launch of our new website by a representative of Acid Yellow at the AGM, a distinct lack of communication, and very disappointing results versus what we expected and had been promised, WAY took the very difficult decision to sever ties with them before we handed over any more payments, cut our losses and instruct a new company who were capable of carrying out the work required. After careful consideration we found the right team in autumn of 2013, launched a WAY Website appeal to raise funds to re-do it, gained a generous donation from a member to kick start the project, and everything is on track as we end 2013 to launch at the 2014 AGM.

Promotion of Way:

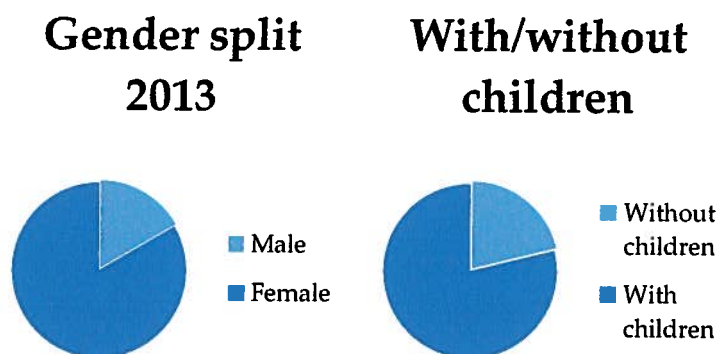
In 2012 it was agreed to fund some PR activity with Market Square, which we did for a few months during 2013. However we felt that the cost wasn't in line with what results we were seeing and could be better spent elsewhere.

We were also hopeful of gaining corporate sponsorship from Aviva, however they pulled out of this due to the economic climate and lack of budget.

We continue to run our own PR through Social Media and responding to media requests for interviews. We realise that we need to take a more proactive approach to getting our name out there, preferably by employing an in-house Press Officer, and hope to make a decision on this soon as our current volunteer Press Officer is standing down next year due to work commitments.

Membership Statistics

By the end of 2013 WAY had a total of **1513** members, the breakdown of the membership is shown below:



These proportions are up on the previous year with membership increasing by a net **200** members in 2013. There were **921** members who renewed their membership during the year, and **592** new members joined. However, **546** members did not renew their membership. This is the usual pattern of membership during the year, although looking back on 2012 we have slightly fewer members both joining and leaving this year.

Exact membership numbers are open to some interpretation as we tend not to remove members as soon as they have lapsed. Many members find renewing their membership at a time when they have more pressing problems to deal with (such as the anniversary of their partners' death) comes far down on their list of priorities. Therefore members are allowed a small period of grace before they are officially removed from the current database.

Currently WAY still has no automatic system to ensure members renew or are removed from the database. The new website and associated online database will provide us with the mechanism to automate membership renewal and also allow members to renew online via the website, rather than through Just Giving or by cheque as it is at the moment.

Finances

The total income and expenditure for the charity in 2013, compared to the previous year, is shown below:

	2013	2012
	£	£
Income		
Members subscriptions	11,222	11,908
Members renewals	8,668	12,370
Donations - Green Tokens	512	
Donations - General	13,218	9,489
Donations - Big Picnic	373	
Donations - Way/WayUp	1,147	
Donation - Toby & Crown Golf Day	650	
Donations - New Database	15,000	
Fundraising - New Database	1,984	
Fundraising	5,636	5,379
Lottery	1,031	1,009
Merchandise	575	804
Bank interest	938	333
Gift Aid	7,182	7,223
Way Branch closure		2,287
AGM 2014	11,145	
AGM 2013	10,419	21,991
AGM 2012		4,406
Holidays	12,954	30
TOTAL Income	102,653	77,227
Expenditure	£	£
Telecoms and Website	(2,640)	(2,804)
Advertising and promotion	(16,162)	(15,364)
NCVO	(4,082)	
Postage	(1,730)	(1,684)
Staff Costs - Administration	(12,028)	(10,475)
Fundraiser Fees	(745)	
Training	(185)	
Committee expenses	(2,241)	(2,523)
IT Expenditure	(1,790)	(709)
Merchandise	(5,299)	(1,171)
Fundraising - Dragon Boat Race	(428)	
Grants to local groups	(113)	(108)
Big Picnic	(3,962)	0
Holidays	(21,607)	(1,106)
AGM 2014	(328)	
AGM 2013	(30,691)	(1,000)
AGM 2012		(18,814)
Database	(18,876)	(6,705)
Just Giving	(1,069)	(692)
Virgin Money Giving	(22)	(15)
Bank Charges	(59)	(30)
Insurance	(449)	(439)
Card Processing Costs	(160)	(144)
Audit Fees	(60)	(110)
Paypal	(82)	(57)
Prior Year Adjustment		(375)
Other		(1,276)
Total Expenditure	(124,806)	(65,600)
Net (deficit)/surplus for the year	(22,153)	11,627

Finances Cont.

The increase in expenditure for 2013 was mainly due to the continued use of Market Square for PR in the early months of the year, the NCVO training costs, promotional materials for the Big Picnic, and the costs involved with the second website. We hope to recoup and recover some of this expenditure over the next year to ensure there is no deficit at the end of 2014.

The fundraising and donations total in 2013 has been fantastic, with an increase from around £19'000 in 2012 to an amazing total of over £38'000 this year! We hope to build on this to raise even more funds in 2014 and beyond.

The assets attributable to the charity at the end of the year were as follows:

CURRENT ASSETS	2013		2012	
	£	£	£	£
Lloyds Bank Current Account	23,800		17,628	
Less Uncleared (Cheques)/Credits	(6,547)		0	
		17,253		17,628
Co-Operative Bank Current Account	28,924		48,381	
Less Uncleared (Cheques)/Credits	2,679		0	
		31,603		48,381
Lloyds Bank Fixed Term Deposit				
Principality Fixed Term Deposits		10,000		15,000
TOTAL Assets		58,856		81,009
FINANCED BY:				
Accumulated Surplus Brought Forward		81,009		69,382
Net (Deficit)/Surplus for the Year		(22,153)		11,627
		58,855		81,009

THE W.A.Y FOUNDATION	
(The Widowed and Young Foundation)	
CHARITY NUMBER 1072649	
Accounts for the Year Ended 31st December 2013	
Year End Surplus/(Deficit) Analysis	
	£
Retained Surplus 2012	81,009
Ongoing Activities	
Members subscriptions	(686)
Members renewals & donations	2,709
Fundraising	(149)
Merchandise	(4,357)
Gift Aid	(41)
Bank Interest less Charges	576
Audit Fees	50
AGM	(16,036)
Holidays/Grants to Local Groups	(7,582)
Big Picnic	(3,962)
Fundraiser Role	(745)
Telecoms & Website	(918)
Advertising & Promotion	(798)
Postage, Printing, Photocopying	(46)
Staff Costs	(1,553)
Committee Expenses	97
Insurance	(10)
Just Giving/VirginMoneyGiving Charges	(427)
Change in Ongoing Activities	(33,876)
One Off Items	
Database - Cost	(12,171)
Database - Donation	15,000
Database - Fundraising	1,984
NCVO Training	(4,082)
Way Branch Closure	(2,287)
Change in One Off Items	(1,556)
Prior Year Adjustment	375
Other	1,276
Total Change	(33,781)
Retained Surplus 2013	58,855

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Verified:

Ronnie Davidson
General Secretary



Debbie Knivett
Treasurer



Cath Jordan
Independent Examiner

