

Annual Report 2015



Registered Charity 1072649

From December 2015, WAY's Registered Charity number changed to 1164988.

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Introduction

Welcome to WAY's Annual Report for 2015.

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, at the end of 2015, had more than 1,800 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;
- Many opportunities for members to meet others in the same situation, either face to face through organised meetings, or online in our members only forum;
- 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 such as changes to bereavement benefits 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, we will outline the major issues and achievements of 2015, as well as presenting 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 include a summary of our 2020 Strategy, which was presented to members at the 2015 AGM in Cardiff and is still being refined (see The WAY Forward: WAY's 2020 Strategy, p23).

A Word from WAY's Chairman

At last year's AGM, I told members that, at the age of 18, WAY was like an awkward teenager – resembling the Kevin character immortalised by Harry Enfield. WAY's 19th year has definitely not been without its coming of age problems! One major achievement has been completing WAY's transformation to Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) status – as voted on unanimously at the AGM last year. However, there have been issues with some members not understanding the new set up and, as ever when people are passionate about a cause, emotions can run over and cause problems for everyone, including the board.

It has been a difficult year for all concerned but the dedication we all have to WAY is huge. Whenever I attend events with other charities, they always comment that we are going through the rocky development stage in moving from a small charity to a medium-sized one. To ensure we survive and are able to support those who have been widowed at a young age, we need to become more structured and organised so that no one is left out. This transition would have been much smoother if we had had a new Operations Manager in place (after our previous Ops Manager left). However, due to various factors, this appointment did not happen in 2015. As a result, the board has had to manage the charity on a day-to-day basis with help from our part-time Membership Manager. WAY has had a difficult year as a result of this, and unfortunately many of the planned goals that were laid out in our 2020 Strategy have not been achieved.

There will be a new board elected after the AGM in March 2016 and one of the first tasks will hopefully be to employ an Operations Manager to ensure that we can continue to run the charity as smoothly as possible. WAY has relied largely on volunteers for the last 19 years. However, to make sure we reach all of our new members and provide them with the peer-to-peer support they need, we have to up our game. Often our volunteer area contacts are people who are trying to cope with their own grief whilst balancing the demands of their jobs and often bringing up children. We will never operate WAY without volunteers and they will always be necessary to ensure the personal touch that makes WAY so special. However, having a manager employed on a full-time basis will be a valuable safety net to oversee the day-to-day operations of the charity, including the coordination of our volunteers, and to ensure that all processes are adhered to as we continue to grow as a charity.

As you can read on page 8, WAY's founder Caroline Sarll was not widowed herself and yet she had the compassion and determination to set up WAY. This is something we need to bear in mind with future recruitment processes. Other charities like Cancer Research UK, for example, are not run by people with cancer, because of the very nature of the illness. WAY will always need our members involved in running the charity, as we are the only ones who



understand what it is like to be widowed at a young age. But employing non-members to help run the charity on a day to day basis would be beneficial as they will not be restricted by how difficult it is to do things on a practical level when you've been widowed.

WAY needs to provide more opportunities for members to meet and weekends and holidays are key to this. Organising a holiday for many members is difficult, as the dedicated winners of the 2015 Mandy Burrows Award – joint organisers of our biggest annual gathering of WAY members – will agree (see p18)! Thanks to the new events system on our Members' Only website and the soon-to-be launched paid events section, we are hoping this will become easier and more members will feel able to organise weekends away. Once the board can hand back operations to the new Operations Manager, we will also be concentrating on applying for funding to pay salaries for a holiday and events organiser to help make arrangements for members, particularly in areas where there is currently no area contact.

Growing the charity

Our primary focus in our 2020 strategy was to raise awareness of WAY. We estimate that there are around 100,000 people who are eligible to join WAY. As Trustees, we are fully aware that some members do not want WAY to expand too much, as they don't want to lose the personal touch. However, I firmly believe that we should not keep WAY's invaluable support to ourselves. If someone is suffering after being widowed young, then we must make sure WAY is there for them.

For WAY to grow we need to ensure retention of members as well as recruiting new members, which means our membership will be made up of a mixture of those who are newly bereaved and those who are further down the line. After nearly ten years of widowhood, I know I still need support from other WAYers and attending events with people who 'just get it' keeps me going!

continued...



To achieve the planned increase in membership figures we put some stretching targets in place – 2,000 by end 2015, 5,000 by 2016, 8,000 by 2017 and then 20,000 by 2020! This sounds like a lot but if every member introduces 20 new members by raising our profile and leaving leaflets everywhere, we would get to 30,000 new members! I have always liked a challenge! And I am delighted that WAY had more than 1,800 members by 31 December – and more than 2,000 by January 2016. This is the most members WAY has ever had! We also have more Facebook likes and Twitter followers than ever before. Hopefully these followers will help to reach out to more potential members.

Our members have already been helping to spread the word about WAY, by handing out leaflets, posters and business cards, and making presentations about WAY to other key organisations (see p16). In June, I presented to 85 Coroners' Court Support Service volunteers who work with people going through the inquest process. Each one of these volunteers left the meeting with posters, leaflets and business cards to give to people they support who are eligible to join WAY. Many of the volunteers came up to speak to me afterwards to say what a wonderful organisation WAY is, and that they wished they had known about us sooner!



We will continue to support these other organisations that are now coming to us for information and hope they can help to get the word out about WAY too.

Campaign Successes

We have also achieved some notable campaign successes in 2015, working alongside the Child Bereavement Network and other bereavement charities against the proposed changes to Widowed Parents' Allowance (WPA). This culminated in me appearing on BBC Breakfast in January 2016, to highlight how unfair it is that WPA is only paid to widowed parents who were married. We are delighted to report, as this Annual Report goes to press, that significant progress has been made on this front. Please turn to page 19 to find out more.

I joined WAY nearly ten years ago. It is a fantastic charity – and I can truly say it has been a lifeline for me. I don't know where I would be without the support of my WAY friends right across the country. Of course WAY wouldn't be where it was without the commitment and dedication of our amazing volunteers who are at the coal face of our work – from our area contacts to our holiday organisers. I would like to take this opportunity to say an enormous thank you to all our volunteers – and to everyone who helps to make WAY the wonderful charity that it is!

Georgia Elms

Georgia Elms
Chairman, WAY Widowed and Young

"It is difficult to describe how much support I have gained from meeting other people through WAY. The understanding and friendship of other WAY members facing the same awful journey has kept us strong, and enabled me to look to the future. It's not a future I or the children ever wanted, but slowly we have learned that it can be positive and happy. Through WAY's support network, I have made wonderful, supportive and, above all, understanding friends." Andrew

WAY in Numbers – our impact in 2015



WAY had more than 1,850 fully paid up members at the end of December 2015



The number of visitors to our website has increased by more than 86% over the previous year (with 71,337 visitors in 2015 compared to 38,290 visitors during the same period in 2014)



3,600
Facebook
followers

WAY's public Facebook page had more than 3,600 followers by the end of 2015 (up by more than 1,000 on 2014)

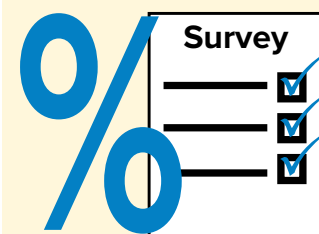


600+ people
30 locations

More than 600 people attended WAY's Big Picnic events at 30 locations across the country in May 2015



More than 85 WAY members and children gathered at Comrie Croft in Scotland in August 2015



WAY's latest 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



31
articles
published

WAY and our members were featured in 31 articles in national newspapers, magazines, local newspapers or websites in 2015 (from *Grazia* to *The Guardian* and from *Cosmopolitan* to the *Huffington Post*).



More than 160 WAY members and children went along to WAY's activity weekend for families and children at Kingswood Activity Centre in February 2015



At the end of 2015, WAY had 70 volunteers across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Between them, these volunteers organised more than 660 events, from coffee meet ups to barbecues



radio show interviews

WAY members were interviewed on seven radio shows in 2015, from Radio 5 Live to BBC London to Jeremy Vine's show on Radio 2, as well as appearing on BBC Breakfast in December



More than 140 WAY members attended our AGM in Cardiff in March 2015

£26,538
raised

WAY members raised £26,538 through various fundraising initiatives in 2015



WAY had more than 1,490 Twitter followers by the end of 2015 (up nearly 50% on 2014)



More than 1,000 people had signed up to receive our Friends of WAY newsletter by December 2014 (up 42% on last year)



More than 40 WAY members and children marked Father's Day at Hoburne Park in Dorset in June 2015



More than 400 WAY members (including children) went to CenterParcs in Sherwood Forest in October 2015

Governance

Changes to the charity status of WAY Widowed and Young from unincorporated charity to Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

During the last year, WAY Widowed and Young has, with the permission of the membership and the approval of the Charities Commission, changed the status of the Charity from an unincorporated Charity to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation – or CIO for short. Since the creation of WAY Widowed and Young as a Charity, the Charity has been an unincorporated charity under charity legislation that was in place at that time. At the inception of WAY this was the only charity status available. A new Charities Act came into force in 2011 that allowed the creation of a new type of charitable status, which has the name of Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). This type of status offers more protection to the Charity, as well as protection to the charity trustees and members. Some of the benefits are outlined below.

The benefits of being a CIO

The CIO status has several benefits over unincorporated charity status, including:

- The trustees and members are personally safeguarded from the financial liabilities the charity incurs, which is not the case for unincorporated charities. Having CIO status offers protection to both the Charity, trustees and members. This is a similar status to a limited company, whereby the company has a limited liability if the company has a claim made against it.
- The charity has a legal personality of its own, enabling it to conduct business in its own name, rather than the name of the trustees, as was the case.
- The advice from the **National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)** to WAY Widowed and Young was that CIO status would be the most suitable model for a small- to medium-sized charity, like WAY Widowed and Young, that employs staff and/or enters into contracts.

Having CIO status would be viewed as less of a potential risk for any potential external trustee who could bring expertise in a particular field to the charity, if it was felt that having an external trustee would advance the aims of the Charity. The Charities Commission and the NCVO encourage charities to bring in expertise from other organisations.

WAY is governed by a set of rules, called the constitution. This document was drawn up by the founders of WAY Widowed and Young when the charity was started.

It is a legal document and was lodged with the Charities Commission of England and Wales. The constitution had been amended from time to time during the time WAY Widowed and Young has been in existence to ensure that it meets the current needs of the work carried out by the Charity. The constitution that was in place for the unincorporated charity was not suitable to meet the requirements of the Charities Commission for granting of CIO status.

The Executive Board reviewed the current charitable status of the Charity as part of a general overview of the governance of the charity with the help of the NCVO. The first part of this review was outlined by the Chairman at the AGM in 2014. The Executive Board recommended to the membership changing the charity status from unincorporated CIO as part of the notification document sent to every member of WAY Widowed and Young prior to the 2015 AGM.

Details of the proposed change were presented by the General Secretary at the 2015 AGM. For the proposed changes to be adopted by the Charity, the proposals needed to be passed by a two thirds majority of the votes cast from the attendees at the AGM and any proxy votes cast by members not able to attend in person. In order to change the Charity Status to CIO the constitution of the original charity needed to be updated to meet the requirements of the Charities Commission. As part of the charity status change this new constitution was presented as part of the AGM notification document to the membership prior to the AGM and fully discussed during the business section of the AGM.

The membership approved the proposal of the Trustees at the 2015 AGM to make application to the Charities Commission for a change of Charity status, which included the changing of the constitution of the Charity to that required to meet the application for CIO status.

Application was made to the Charities Commission in October 2015. On the 29 December 2015 the Charities Commission granted WAY Widowed and Young CIO status. The Charity is now a Charitable Incorporated Organisation with the new registered charity number 1164988.

Currently the charity is in the process of changing over the assets of the old charity to the new CIO and this is expected to be completed early in 2016.

The above change in charity status is one of the steps that the charity is taking to move forward to meet the requirements of a growing membership but the Charity will always ensure that the help, support and assistance that has always been the cornerstones of the Charity will continue.



WAY General Secretary

Meet WAY's Executive Board

The Executive Board met three times in 2015 (and also met via Skype) to discuss governance issues and the strategic direction of WAY.

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 the small Scottish village of Clackmannan 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

"My husband was diagnosed with stomach cancer in 2000 when I was pregnant with Ben, our first (and only!) child. 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 five years now and really enjoy the challenges it brings."

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: Louise Smith

"I was widowed in April 2011 when my husband Richard died of cancer. Our children were 1 and 3 years old at the time. Over the next year or so several people mentioned WAY to me as being a great organisation, but I didn't realise just how great it was until I joined in the summer of 2012. I quickly found my feet and got involved with the many different activities that WAY has to offer, and became the Area Contact for Oxfordshire in August 2014.



I believe that I have a lot of appropriate skills and experience that I can bring to WAY as a Trustee, and I am very keen to help the charity achieve its 2020 vision – to have 20,000 members by the year 2020. There are some specific skills I have, which I feel can add to the current Executive Committee helping them build on the great foundations that WAY already has."



A Word from WAY's Founder



WAY's founder Caroline Sarll (right) with WAY's Chair Georgia Elms at the 2015 AGM.

At the 2015 AGM in Cardiff, WAY members heard from WAY's founder Caroline Sarll, who set up WAY 18 years ago in Cardiff after her own sister Mandy was widowed at the age of 34.

The Sarll sisters had lost their father when they were children, and Caroline was determined that things would be different for her widowed sister than they had been for her mother a generation earlier.

"Nobody talked about death then, and certainly nobody talked to me about it at the age of eight," she said. "When Dad died, there was only Cruse, still very much in its infancy, which could offer any support. Mum was 41 and went to one of their meetings and came back quite dejected, saying, 'Everyone was in their 70s and didn't empathise with what we are going through.'"

"I didn't want to see my beautiful sister marginalised like my Mum was," explained Caroline. She says she felt driven to change things, having not only seen her mother and sister suffer, but having been bereaved as a child herself.

"I couldn't believe that exactly 25 years after dad's death, there was still no help in place for those widowed young," she said.

So Caroline gave up her job as a BBC producer and broadcaster and set up what was then called The WAY Foundation from her living room – sticking stamps on envelopes and delivering leaflets to doctor's surgeries on foot.

After publicising the new venture in the Welsh national press and on Radio 2 and Radio 4, she received phone calls day and night (these were the days before the Internet!). Letters also came flooding in from all over Britain, spurring Caroline on and having a lasting impact. To this day, she remembers verbatim an extract from one that she received from a young widower:

"Losing someone young brings a twofold grief. The pain of losing that person is combined with the pain of knowing what he or she has lost."

There were just 33 people at the first WAY meeting Caroline organised in Cardiff 18 years ago. And as she surveyed the room full of more than 140 delegates at the Angel Hotel last April, Caroline said how amazed and humbled and deeply proud she was to see how the organisation has grown over the past two decades.

"I hope WAY will continue to grow," she said. "WAY is here for each and every one of you. I just wish there had been something like this for my mother and sister. And my message is to keep fighting and keep supporting each other. Don't let petty politics get in the way. It's the members who should always come first."



WAY members at the Cardiff AGM. Photo: Jonathan White / White Fusion

Bringing WAY Members Together

Website

In 2014, we launched our new website and Members' Only website, which continues to go from strength to strength and is a fantastic resource for members and non-members alike. In 2015, we saw an 86% increase in the number of users of our website over the same period in 2014 – with 71,337 unique visitors to our website over 12 months. During the same period we had more than 216,000 visits to our website – which means that visitors are using WAY's website twice as much as they were last year.

The Members' Only part of WAY's website is being very well used, with 24,835 new posts in our Members' Only Forum over the past 12 months on topics ranging from inquests to DIY SOS to recipe suggestions.

The new Events section of our website is also very popular, with members posting more than 600 events since this interactive section of the website was launched in 2015. All members are welcome to organise an event and to invite other people (or groups of people) to attend.

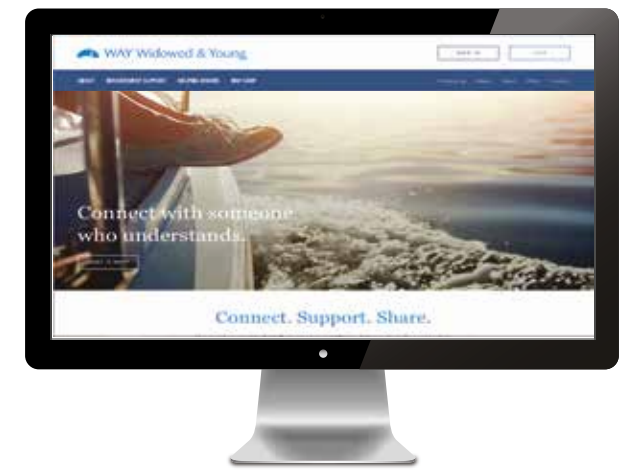
The Events section makes it easy for members to have an overview of events that are coming up either locally or nationally so that they can get involved in a range of activities, if they would like to.

Members can also now book onto and pay for some national events through our website, making the administration of events much easier for our Operations Team. And WAY members can also now renew and manage their membership online, as well as updating their address and contact details.

WAY members can now see who lives close to them geographically and can message each other directly, via the Members' Only Area, as well as chatting live with other members in the chatrooms.

The update to WAY's website was also very necessary for our Membership Manager Gemma Greenbank to be able to manage our member database more effectively.

All of WAY's policies and procedures, as well as past Annual Reports and newsletters, are available in the How WAY Works section of the Members' Only Area, which includes a wealth of information for members about how the charity is run.



We are currently working on a user guide to help members navigate the Members' Only Area and to help our members get the most out of the website.

Facebook



In 2015, WAY's board members decided to phase out administrative support for WAY's closed Facebook page. It was felt that the charity could no longer support the administration of both this Facebook group and the members' only website.

One of our members kindly volunteered to take over the administration of the Facebook group to make sure that all the members of the group are current WAY members. However, we are encouraging as many members as possible to post on the Members' Only Forum, as this is a secure area that is only accessed by current WAY members.

As mentioned in the communications section of this Annual Report, we continue to run WAY's public Facebook page (at www.facebook.com/WAYwidowedandyoung), which is a good way to reach out to members, supporters and potential members about our work and to get involved in topical discussions that are relevant to WAY members.



We also have a Twitter account @WidowedandYoung, so please do join our 1,490+ followers, if you have a Twitter account.

"After logging on to WAY's website for the first time, I felt as if a light had been switched on. From feeling completely alone and not knowing anyone of my age who'd been widowed, I discovered a whole community of people who had been widowed at a young age and knew exactly how I felt."
Pherenice

Holidays & Events

There are lots of activities and events that WAY members can get involved with, either at a local or national level. And there are also several overseas trips organised by members every year.

We have a network of 60 local area coordinators as well as local members who organise 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 Members' Only website, so they can always find someone to talk to or meet up with for a coffee or a drink. And it's easy for members to set up their own events through the members' only website too.

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 last 12 months, 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 2015 included a New Year skiing trip in the French Alps, a family activity weekend at Kingswood in South Yorkshire in February, a trip to Italy in April, a Father's Day trip to Dorset in June, a gathering at Comrie Croft in Scotland in August, a walking trip to the Lakes and an annual gathering at CenterParcs in Sherwood Forest in October, which attracted some 400 WAY members (including children).

WAY also organises an annual general meeting every March. 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. In 2015, more than 140 members met up at the Angel Hotel in Cardiff.

WAY's 2016 AGM is due to take place in Liverpool in March and there are plenty of other events to look forward to in 2016 too, including trips to Kingswood, CenterParcs, the Lake District, Comrie Croft in Scotland, Dorset and Derbyshire.



What WAY members got up to in 2015

There were weekends away and holidays for WAY members to take part in during nearly every month of 2015...

January: A group of 57 WAYers and 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

March: More than 140 WAY members attended our AGM in Cardiff

April: A group of WAYers and their children travelled to Italy

May: More than 600 people attended WAY's Big Picnic events at 30 locations across the country in one weekend

June: More than 40 WAY members and children marked Father's Day at Hoburne Park in Dorset

June: A group of 15 adults and 24 children headed for a week at Eden Farm, Somerset

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

August: More than 85 WAY member and children gathered at Comrie Croft in Scotland

September: A group of WAY members went away for the weekend in Edinburgh

October: More than 400 WAY members (including children) went to CenterParcs in Sherwood Forest

October: A group of more than 30 WAYers went walking in the Lake District

December: 26 WAYers without kids (WAY WOKs) went to Bruges for the weekend

December: A group of 46 WAY members and children got together for a pre-Christmas weekend in Combruih, Scotland



Big Picnic, Big Success

In May 2015, WAY held our third annual Big Picnic weekend, which is open to all WAY's members and friends. The weather was kind to us and we had 30 picnic events at different locations from Scotland to South Wales – with around 600 visitors over the course of the weekend. Our biggest picnic in Herts & Bucks saw 80 people attending!

WAY's Big Picnic weekend is a chance for members to meet each other in an informal setting, as well as an opportunity for WAY's supporters and potential members and friends to find out more about our charity.

Here are some of our favourite photos from picnics across the country...



Adventures at Kingswood Activity Centre

More than 160 WAY members and kids enjoyed an action-packed and very muddy weekend at Kingswood Activity Centre in South Yorkshire in February 2015. Adults and children alike got to face their fears on the high ropes and climbing wall, fly through the air on zip wires, learn new skills like archery – as well as making lots of new friends along the way. WAY member Eleanor and her three children took a step into the unknown...

“There’s a new verb in our house – zip wiring! My 5 year old is particularly fond of telling everyone she’s been zip wiring. No mean feat for one just over 3 feet high to take a step off a 20 metre drop. But that’s Kingswood – constantly taking steps into the unknown but always landing safely, whether physically or emotionally. There is support to be found in simply being together, in the activities you do (lots of camaraderie and cheering each other on) or the conversations over bacon, campfires, discos and the odd cider or two!

There are four of us – me (42), George (9), Eva (7) and Antonia (5). This was our first time at Kingswood and our first WAY family event. Expectations and nerves were high, though the thought of a catering free weekend spurred me on. I booked because this was exactly the kind of event I’d been looking for. For families, activity based, catered (have I mentioned this yet!) all with other bereaved adults and kids – doing something (relatively) normal but with lots of other people who just happen to share a common theme.

So we zipped, bush crafted, problem solved, got muddy, climbed, fired arrows, discoed and had a great time and all too quickly Sunday afternoon had arrived.

After three years of just getting through each day, it was lovely to watch with excitement and then pride as my kids did and achieved things they’ve simply never done before



– be it taking a leap of faith and zip wiring, climbing a 10m pole and standing on the top or simply the sheer fun of running around at the disco with new friends.

The summary has to come from my children, as this is the reason I went to Kingswood. Here is their reply when asked what they liked:

- Antonia (5):** zip wiring, lunch and dinner.
- Eva (7):** disco, met loads of people and everyone has lost a mum and dad and you don’t feel like the only one in the world who’s lost a mum or a dad – it makes it feel normal.
- George (9):** everything – zip wire, archery, really fun, get to do a lot activities, not alone, feels safe.
- Mum:** no cooking and time with my children (sometimes a rare commodity in between the demands of life).

A huge thank you to Martin Bayliss and his wife Jane, without whom none of this would have happened. For me the therapeutic benefits of this holiday are far reaching and better than any counselling.

A generous donation from WAY members Martin and Jane Bayliss allowed kids to go free for the whole Kingswood weekend in February 2015. The gathering has now become something of a WAY tradition every year.

“For me the therapeutic benefits of this holiday are far reaching and better than any counselling.” Eleanor

Finding the WAY to CenterParcs

The biggest annual gathering of WAY members traditionally takes place at the end of October at CenterParcs in Sherwood Forest. Organised by a small team of dedicated WAYers, this year more than 400 WAY members (including children) enjoyed activities ranging from football to bike rides.

Here’s how one WAY member, Sarah, described why she has been going to WAY’s CenterParcs gathering for the past eight years: “Thinking back to me being a scared young widow with a 3 year old boy, I remember watching the members who were much further into this journey and hoping that one day I would feel stronger and be able to laugh as much as they were doing. Well, this weekend I laughed so much that my stomach hurt – with new and not so new members. Hopefully those on their first WAY trip will have formed great friendships and made lots of happy memories too.”

Another more recently bereaved WAY member, also called Sarah, who went on her first trip to CenterParcs in October with her three children, told us: “We left on Monday morning a different family. The children were relaxed and I felt hope, and a lot more confident in my new family unit. Yes, we didn’t choose this life. No, it still isn’t going to be easy. But suddenly we weren’t alone, we weren’t different. Nobody looked at us with pity that weekend or was too scared to speak to us. I knew – and I still know now – even though I may forget it sometimes, that things will be OK.”

And another CenterParcs first timer, Aisha, describes how the weekend helped her to feel so much more positive: “After an apprehensive start on the Friday, my son and I had a wonderful weekend. We had lots of fun, lots of smiles, lots of laughs and made lots of friends... The Saturday morning pre-school party was fab. My son particularly enjoyed all the female attention over the weekend and I managed to get a hot cup of coffee and finish a warm meal – something I thought was a thing of the past! I never thought I’d have the courage to walk up to someone and introduce myself and say ‘we are with WAY’, but I did and received the warmest of welcomes. Thank you for helping me take steps in the right direction and do what I thought would be impossible. Before this weekend I was at rock bottom and considered not going, but after this weekend, I realised it was exactly what I needed and I’m feeling a lot more positive. Here’s to a fab weekend and many more.”



Raising Funds for WAY

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

In September 2014, we took the decision to increase our membership fee to £25 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.

Our online shop has raised more than £2,700 for WAY in 2015 and we are also looking at other ways of generating funds.

Our members were incredibly generous in pledging their time and money to raise funds for WAY during 2015. In fact, our members raised more than £26,538 during the year for WAY.

Some of WAY's fundraising highlights of 2015 include:

- **Andrew Ware** cycled 4,000 miles across the US (see story) raising £2,860 for WAY.
- **Pherenice Worsey-Buck** (see story) decided to run in 43 races (the age of her husband when he died) over the course of 12 months and has so far raised more than £700 for WAY.
- The **Woolly Hugs** online Easter Craft sale raised more than £1,500 for WAY in April 2015.
- WAY was chosen as the Charity of the Year by the Financial Crimes Department at the **Coventry Building Society**, thanks to a nomination from one of our members Helen Emery. Through the gruelling 10K Wolf Run and other fundraising activities, the team raised nearly £4,000 for WAY, including generous match funding from the Coventry Building Society.
- **Danny Wan** – the brother of one of our members – raised more than £300 for WAY running in the London Marathon in April.
- And **Simone Gray** took part in the Manchester 10K run on 10 May in memory of her late husband Mark – raising more than £450 for WAY.
- **Ruth Polwart** ran in the Great Women's 10k in Glasgow for WAY on 17 May and raised nearly £1,000.
- **Tracey Ahmed** ran in the Great North Run in September and she and her son together raised more than £430.
- Essex WAY member and Freemason **Barney Hunt** nominated WAY to receive £500 in charity funds raised by King Alfred Lodge during his year as Worshipful Master.
- WAY member **Connie Wan-Docksey** sold some beautiful home-made paper cut Christmas cards in aid of WAY, raising £50 for WAY.
- Winchester Rotary made a generous £500 donation towards Hampshire WAY's Christmas party.

A word about members' data

Following recent media reports about the way some charities have been using data to raise funds, we wanted to assure our members, friends and supporters that WAY has never and will never share or sell our members' data to any agency, company or business. We will not share members' data with anyone else without their express permission. And while we do have to raise funds to keep the charity running, we would never hound our members, friends or supporters for money.

Cycling across the US for WAY



In the summer of 2015, Cambridgeshire WAY member Andrew Ware cycled 4,000 miles coast to coast across the US to raise money for WAY and two other charities in memory of his wife, Jane, who died in 2013. He raised nearly £3,000 for WAY. So what is it that motivated Andrew to take on this gruelling challenge, cycling up to 100 miles a day for two months?

"We had already been planning this ride when Jane died. After two Land's End to John O'Groats rides, I needed something bigger. Then in October 2013, with no warning, Jane was suddenly admitted to hospital with Sepsis. She died 48 hours later. Our two children, Thomas and Katie, were 7 and 11 at the time. We were all devastated, and our world felt like it had ended.

In the first few weeks after Jane died, I didn't know how I could live the rest of my life, let alone get on a bike again. Suddenly even a 30-minute jog meant finding childcare. But as people so often do when things are blackest, I slowly found a way to cope. Friends and family rallied round.

Now that I'm doing this challenge without Jane, the trip has taken on a huge emotional significance. The planning has been an excellent focus, at a time when the rest of my life is in pieces. And in a peculiar way, I feel Jane is coming with me. Unlike me, she never cycled a long way. Instead, she was always at home with the children, sending me supportive texts. But now I am carrying her wedding ring 4,000 miles across the USA...

I joined WAY about 11 months after Jane died. I had come to realise I couldn't cope in isolation. Friends and family have been fantastic, but no one quite understands the loss unless they've been in a similar situation.

It is difficult to describe how much support I have gained from meeting other people through WAY. The understanding and friendship of other WAY members facing the same awful journey has kept us strong, and enabled me to look to the future. It's not a future I or the children ever wanted, but slowly we have learned that it can be positive and happy. Through WAY's support network, I have made wonderful, supportive and, above all, understanding friends. And to hear from people who are further through their bereavement that there is a future to live for – that made this 4,000-mile ride possible."

Pherenice's 43 race challenge



Bromley WAY member Pherenice Worsey-Buck took on the challenge of running in 43 races in 2015 in memory of her husband Mark Lee, who was 43 when he died. As well as raising more than £700 for WAY, Pherenice was also chosen as one of Paula Radcliffe's Great Runners in 2015. Here is Pherenice's story...

"I was widowed in 2013 at the age of 39, when Mark died suddenly of oesophageal cancer. It was running that helped me through my grief, encouraged by my children who decided their mummy needed to 'get fit'.

I had never run before my husband died and this is a journey that has completely transformed my life. I started on a treadmill, alternating running for 30 seconds and walking for 30 seconds. But gradually I increased my time and soon could go for 20 minutes without stopping. As I got fitter and ran further, I noticed the grief begin to lift. I signed up for my local Bromley Parkrun, a 5km timed race that I took part in on the first anniversary of Mark's death. Crossing the line in 29 minutes gave me a sense of purpose that I had been lacking in the previous 12 months. Running gave me a place to grieve. If I was feeling really bad I'd run really fast or head up a steep hill, often with tears streaming down my face. The pain took away the agony inside and gave me the focus I needed so desperately.

I will always grieve the loss of Mark and the future we planned together. But his illness opened my eyes to how precious and short life is. You can either exist or start living – and I have chosen the latter.

I joined WAY about two months after Mark died. After logging on to WAY's website for the first time, I felt as if a light had been switched on. From feeling completely alone and not knowing anyone of my age who'd been widowed, I discovered a whole community of people who had been widowed at a young age and knew exactly how I felt. Those people have helped me to get through the last two years and this is my chance to say thank you to them."

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

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

We are also encouraging members and their friends and family to set up 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 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.



Getting the Word out about WAY – Communications

We have four ways of communicating with our members:

- 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 keep our members up to date with what's going on via our Members' Only website
- And we post information on our Facebook closed group and on our public Facebook page, as well as on our Twitter feed (@WidowedandYoung).

We also reach out to potential WAY members in several ways:

In 2014, we launched a regular enewsletter for friends and supporters who are interested in WAY's work. By the end of 2015, more than 1,000 Friends of WAY had signed up to receive this enewsletter (up 42% on last year). 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.

Over the past two years we have seen a steady increase in quality national media coverage, which is helping us to spread the word about WAY to a wider audience and has helped to increase the number of new members joining WAY in 2015.

WAY and our members were featured in 19 articles in some of the UK's highest-circulation national newspapers or magazines in 2015 (from *Grazia* to *Woman & Home* and from the *Telegraph* to the *Daily Express* and *The Guardian*). Our members also appeared in five local newspapers (from the *Leicester Mercury* to the *Lincolnshire Echo*) and in seven online articles (including articles in the *Huffington Post*, *Mumsnet*, *The Telegraph* online and *The Guardian* online).

We also scored considerable success in the broadcast media in 2015. Our members were interviewed on seven BBC radio shows, including Radio 5 Live and Jeremy Vine's lunchtime show on Radio 2, which has an audience of more than 7 million listeners.

Our members north of the border appeared in a BBC TV documentary on BBC Alba in March. One of our West Midlands members was also chosen to feature in Alan Titchmarsh's *Love Your Garden* makeover show in the summer. Our media coverage in 2015 ended on a high note with three of our members appearing on BBC Breakfast in December as part of a series of features on death and bereavement.



Here are some of the highlights of our 2015 media coverage:

- WAY members were featured in some of UK's top selling magazines including *Cosmopolitan*, *Grazia*, *Closer*, *New Magazine*, *Prima*, *Woman & Home*, *Women's Health*, *Bella*, *Fabulous* and *That's Life*
- WAY member Paul Verrico was interviewed on BBC Radio 5 Live, on Jeremy Vine's Radio 2 show as well as in the *Telegraph* and the *Irish Times* following the death of Rio Ferdinand's wife
- Three WAY members appeared on BBC Breakfast in December
- WAY members were interviewed on a range of topics in national newspapers including *The Guardian*, the *Mail on Sunday* and the *Daily Express*
- WAY members also appeared in seven articles on a range of online platforms – from the *Huffington Post* to *Mumsnet*
- WAY members were interviewed on local BBC radio shows in London, Wales, Northampton and Scotland while WAY members appeared in local newspapers – ranging from the *Cambridge News* to the *Bromley Times*
- Dear Deidre mentioned WAY in her advice column in the *Sun*.

You can keep up to date with all WAY's latest media coverage on our website at www.widowedandyoung.org.uk/media or on WAY's public Facebook page.



Reaching out to new members

WAY member Helen Bailey also published her book, *When Bad Things Happen in Good Bikinis*, in October 2015 about losing her husband in a swimming accident while on holiday in Barbados. Helen mentioned WAY within the pages of her book and in press coverage about her book, which also helped more new members to find out about WAY.



We also increased WAY's social media presence substantially during 2015 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 1,490 Twitter followers by the end of 2015 (up nearly 50% on 2014) and we had more than 3,600 followers on our public Facebook page by the end of the year – up by more than 1,000 followers on 2014 (we also have a separate closed Facebook page for members only – see p9).

We also encouraged our members to help spread the word about WAY in 2015. We developed a standard PowerPoint presentation, which has been used by WAY members over the course of the year, including a presentation by WAY's Chairman at the Coroners' Court Support Service (CCSS) annual conference in June. Presentations were also made by members to local Cruse volunteers in York and to a local hospice telephone support team and Rotary Club members in the Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire area.

We also printed up new business cards, leaflets and posters in 2015 for members to take along to their local GP surgeries, hospices and funeral directors to help people find out about WAY at a time when they need our charity's support.



We hope to continue to look at new ways to improve our communication with members in 2016, as well as making the most of opportunities to reach out to potential new members through social media, traditional media and working together with other organisations like CCSS whenever the opportunity arises.

Love Your Garden

West Midlands WAY member Nina Perrins-Seedhouse was chosen by Alan Titchmarsh from thousands of applicants for one of his *Love Your Garden* TV makeovers after producers of the show approached WAY last year asking for us to share the stories of members might like to take part.

We were inundated with applications from WAY members who wanted to meet the green-fingered Alan Titchmarsh – and were really sad that only one of our members could take part. However, we were delighted when Nina was chosen to be the first makeover candidate for a new series of *Love Your Garden*, which screened on 23 June 2015.

Alan Titchmarsh and his team transformed Nina's garden in memory of her husband Gareth, a former Walsall Council parks manager, who died from cancer in 2014 at the age of 38.

Nina and the couple's three young children Cole, aged seven, Maxi, four and Evie, aged two, are now thoroughly enjoying the green surroundings.

"I cannot put in to words what Alan and his team have given to us as a family," said Nina. "It is so special because it is a living and growing tribute to Gareth. I feel him with us every day. He would have been over the moon."



Volunteers

WAY simply could not function without all the wonderful volunteers across the country who help our organisation to run – from the 60 area coordinators who run local WAY groups to the members who give up their time to organise events to our trustees who decide on the long-term strategy of WAY.

In order to recognise the tireless work of our volunteers, we launched the Mandy Burrows Memorial Award for Outstanding Contribution to WAY in 2014. This is an annual award held in honour of a WAY member who tragically passed away in 2014. Volunteers are nominated anonymously by other members if it is felt they have done something outstanding for the charity. Our first winners were announced at WAY's 2015 AGM.

The Mandy Burrows Memorial Award



We are delighted to announce that WAY volunteers Sharon Whitehead and Linda Heywood (pictured) are the joint winners of the first Mandy Burrows Award, for their outstanding contribution to WAY.

Sharon and Linda have been tirelessly organising the CenterParcs weekend in Sherwood Forest every October since 2003 – a weekend that now regularly attracts around 400 WAY members (including children) every year!

"When I heard we'd won the award it made my day," said Sharon. "It's such a lovely honour to be the joint recipient of Mandy's award. Linda and I don't arrange the weekend to win awards. We do it to see the enjoyment everyone gets from the weekend but it was so lovely for the hard work to be recognised like this."

"Given that, for me, the great and enduring strength of WAY is the mutual support offered by its members," added Linda, "the Mandy Burrows Award could easily have been given to any one of the many behind the scenes volunteers who keep WAY alive year on year. Although we know from our pre-weekend planning, comments over the break itself and the thanks we receive afterwards online and via email, it was humbling to hear that people had taken the time to nominate us and explain what the annual CenterParcs weekend has added to their lives. We know that the weekend has given so much to so many over the years and seeing the smiling faces and hearing happy and uplifting weekend stories is reward itself."



Volunteer in the Spotlight

One of WAY's long-standing volunteers, Heather Marney (below left) talks about how she became Area Administrator for Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire and why she volunteers for WAY.



I joined WAY in December 2008, 18 months after I lost my husband Chris. He died within three months of being diagnosed with secondary cancer, primary unknown. Although I was lucky enough to continue a hectic social life, I needed friends who understood what I was going through. I joined my local hospice group but soon realised I needed to mix with younger people. It was a chance meeting with an acquaintance at our local hospice that I found out about WAY and I have never looked back.

My first WAY event was the 2009 AGM in Manchester and this was 200 miles from my home in Hertfordshire. I must have been mad! No, my reasoning behind it was, if I didn't like any of the 200 attendees then I could leave, drive myself home, vanish into thin air and I would never have to set eyes upon these people again. Alas, I met some wonderful people from all over the country that weekend and still enjoy seeing them from time to time at various national events. Through continuing to attend national and local events I have made many close friends and we have managed many holidays and weekends away together.

In May 2010, our WAY Area Administrator decided to relinquish his position and asked if any of the Herts and Bucks members would like to take up the position. I offered to take over only if no-one else came forward, as I didn't want to see the collapse of a wonderfully organised group. I also felt that WAY had given me so much, so it was right to give something back.

Herts and Bucks is run slightly different from the other groups, due to the fact that we cover such a large area. There are seven Area Contacts who welcome the new members with cards, phone calls or emails and encourage them to attend our many events or perhaps just meet for a coffee. We also have our Calendar Coordinator, who plans and produces our Calendar of Events every four months. The calendar is discussed at one of our monthly pub nights, which is attended by our members whom all contribute. I must add that without the input of our members, we would not have such an active and successful group.

Many members choose to entertain in their own homes. It can range from a simple coffee morning to afternoon tea to a Sunday roast to a "Pot Luck" supper. Everyone helps by contributing in their own way. It is all about being together and supporting each other. Our most well attended event is the Big Picnic where last year we had a staggering 80 attendees. Needless to say, not all our events are that big and perhaps three or four members may have a meal together. Having an active group develops over time, so I would say to all other Area Contacts, "persevere and find someone to share the responsibilities".

My role as Area Administrator is to allocate the new members to a relevant Area Contact. This can be decided geographically or by the member's circumstances. Our Area Contacts have been bereaved under different circumstances and we therefore try to match the new member with the appropriate Area Contact. A large part of my role is to email our calendar and event reminders to over 160 members. Many of these members live on the borders of Herts and Bucks. Event reminders are sent out about a week before the event is due and I think this works well as this is when most members will RSVP to an event. Of course, as with any role, there is always correspondence to deal with. I would wholeheartedly recommend being a volunteer, you feel more involved, appreciated and there is a sense of satisfaction by helping others.



Some of the 80 Herts & Bucks members enjoying the Big Picnic.

Campaigning for Change

WAY is continuing to work with the Childhood Bereavement Network and other bereavement organisations to raise concerns about proposed changes to bereavement benefits, including Widowed Parents' Allowance (WPA). We are particularly concerned about Universal Credit and how this will affect widowed parents. Universal Credit is being rolled out nationally and replaces six existing benefits: Income based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support, Child Tax Credit, Working Tax Credit and Housing Benefit. We continue to raise the concerns of widowed parents with the Department for Work and Pensions to clarify exactly how Universal Credit will work for current and future claimants of WPA.

In December 2015, WAY's Chairman Georgia Elms met with other organisations including Cruse, Gingerbread & the Child Bereavement Network (CBN) as part of WAY's ongoing efforts to make sure that widows and widowed parents are not adversely affected by proposed changes to the benefit system. There are some changes afoot, including – encouragingly – some discussion about making non-married parents eligible for WPA in future.



As this Annual Report was about to go to print, WAY's Chairman Georgia Elms was invited to talk on the BBC Breakfast sofa in January 2016 to explain why unmarried parents should be eligible to receive bereavement benefits, including Widowed Parents' Allowance, in exactly the same way as parents who were married.

There was a flurry of media interest around this story in January 2016, which helped to draw attention to the issue – and also led to a petition that was shared 200 times and reached more than 22,000 people via WAY's public Facebook page.

There was a huge spike in visitors to our website as a result, and 50 new Likes on our public Facebook page.

Early in February, the BBC also reported that there had been a landmark ruling on this issue in the High Court of Northern Ireland, which could have far-reaching implications for co-habiting parents who weren't married at the time of their partner's death. WAY will continue to campaign on this issue in 2016. Please look out for updates on our public Facebook page.



The accounts for 2015 show a healthy surplus of £38k, as anticipated following two years of deficit. Having completed the significant investment in the new website, and increasing membership fees for the first time in ten years, we are now replenishing the reserves we hold and providing funding for future developments.

Income

Total income is up over 30% year on year. 1,100 new members and 884 renewing members contributed nearly £50k to funds. Gift Aid is up year on year, mainly due to claiming a backlog of transactions. Holiday income includes payments for the Kingswood activity weekend in February, with the invoice being paid in 2016.

Expenditure

Expenditure is significantly less than the previous year, mainly due to the completion of the website, and to there being no Operations Manager employed during 2015. Some of the costs, however, have increased over the course of the year due to the fact that we now have more members.

We have changed the way administration costs are analysed in 2015, to show the spend on items such as the *WAY Forward* magazine and e-newsletters, rather than having it all in one lump sum. Taking all such items together total spend in 2015 was £31k and in 2014 was £20k. Some of this is due to the Derby office, which was acquired at the end of 2014 and costs £3,600 per annum. Merchandise stocks have increased as we now offer fleeces, t-shirts and other items for sale at events and through the website as well as hoodies. Sales have also increased year on year.

Expenditure on holidays does not include the Kingswood Activity Weekend in 2016, although the income for this event is largely received in 2015.

Balance Sheet

The surplus in 2015 brings the total assets of the charity to £86k, held across the two bank accounts.

At the end of 2015 we did owe the balance of the payment for the Kingswood Activity Weekend of £5k, plus the final instalment of £6k for the website due to BinaryFold4 will not be paid until all outstanding issues are resolved.

Cashflow and provisions at the moment are therefore very healthy.

Accounts to the end of December 2015 (Unaudited)				
BALANCE SHEET				
	2015		2014	
CURRENT ASSETS	£	£	£	£
Lloyds Bank Current Account	9,521		3,197	
Less Uncleared (Cheques)/Credits	14,798			
	24,318		3,197	
Co-operative Bank Current Account	62,005		6,400	
Less Uncleared (Cheques)/Credits			38,171	
	62,005		44,571	
TOTAL ASSETS	86,323		47,768	
FINANCED BY:				
Accumulated Surplus Brought Forward		47,768		58,855
Net (Deficit)/Surplus for the Year		38,555		(11,091)
	86,323		47,765	

Accounts to the end of December 2015 (unaudited)
INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

	2015	2014
	£	£
Income		
Members subscriptions	27,505	16,260
Members renewals	22,110	6,995
Donations - General	15,507	13,727
Donations - Big Picnic	108	0
Fundraising - New Website		615
Fundraising	10,923	8,897
Income - Other	813	6,691
Merchandise	2,792	1,884
Bank Interest	42	199
Gift Aid	7,735	3,127
AGM 2016	6,666	
AGM 2015	15,732	12,265
AGM 2014	(200)	13,270
Holidays	17,063	10,814
TOTAL INCOME	126,797	94,704
Expenditure	£	£
Telecoms and Website		(1,259)
Advertising and promotion		(14,182)
NCVO	(100)	(687)
Administration	(6,897)	(2,172)
WAY Forward	(11,743)	
WAY E-Newsletters	(1,875)	
Annual Report	(1,879)	
New Members Booklets	(664)	
Media & PR	(5,201)	
Staff Costs - Administration	(11,828)	(10,760)
Operations Manager		(13,891)
Committee expenses	(2,491)	(1,558)
IT Expenditure	(192)	(873)
Merchandise	(5,448)	(2,592)
Fundraising - Grant Applications		(823)
Big Picnic	(2,438)	0
Holidays	(11,400)	(13,941)
AGM 2016	(44)	
AGM 2015	(20,760)	(591)
AGM 2014	(275)	(19,159)
Website	(1,363)	(20,853)
Website Development	(300)	0
Bank Charges		(48)
Insurance	(453)	(449)
Audit Fees	(60)	(60)
Paypal	(2,654)	(1,898)
Other	(178)	0
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	(88,242)	(105,795)
Net (deficit)/surplus for the year	38,555	(11,091)

Membership Statistics

At the end of 2015, WAY had a total of 1,857 members, which is a significant increase on last year and falls just short of our target of 2,000 members by the end of the year. We reached this figure in early 2016.

We saw a significant increase in new members joining WAY in 2015, with 1,100 new members joining the charity during the course of the year (compared to 849 new joiners last year). We have also seen more men joining WAY in 2015 than we have in previous years.

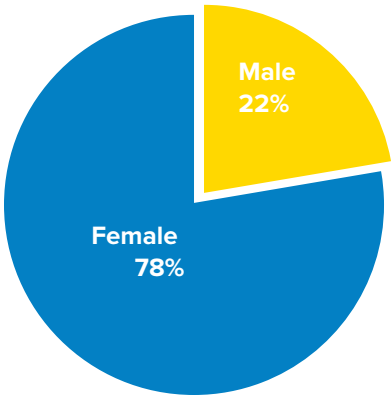
We have invested significant effort and energies into increasing WAY's presence through media coverage and also through social media outreach, which has paid dividends during the year in terms of attracting new members. It is also much easier for members to join WAY now, thanks to the new joining facility through our website.

We had a total of 624 members lapsing during 2015, which is a far lower than the numbers seen lapsing over previous years but still falls short of our overall retention target of 75%. Going forward, we hope that an automated membership renewal system will help with membership retention.

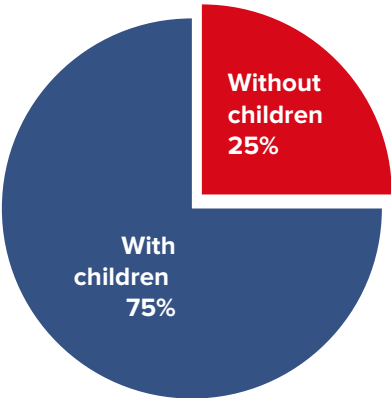
Retaining existing members and recruiting new members continues to be a high priority for WAY, particularly if we are to meet our ambitious 2020 Vision targets (see p23).

The breakdown of WAY's membership is as follows:

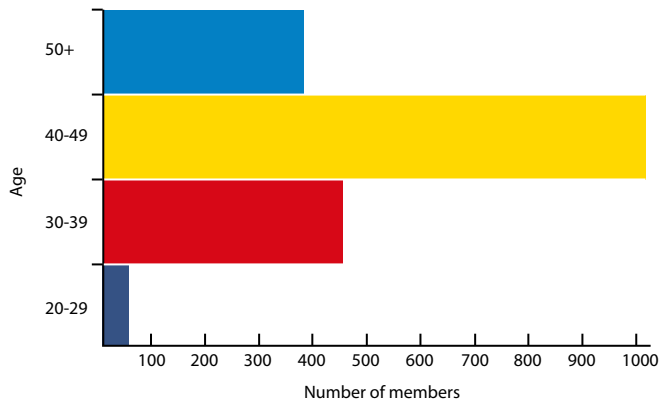
Gender split:



With/without children:



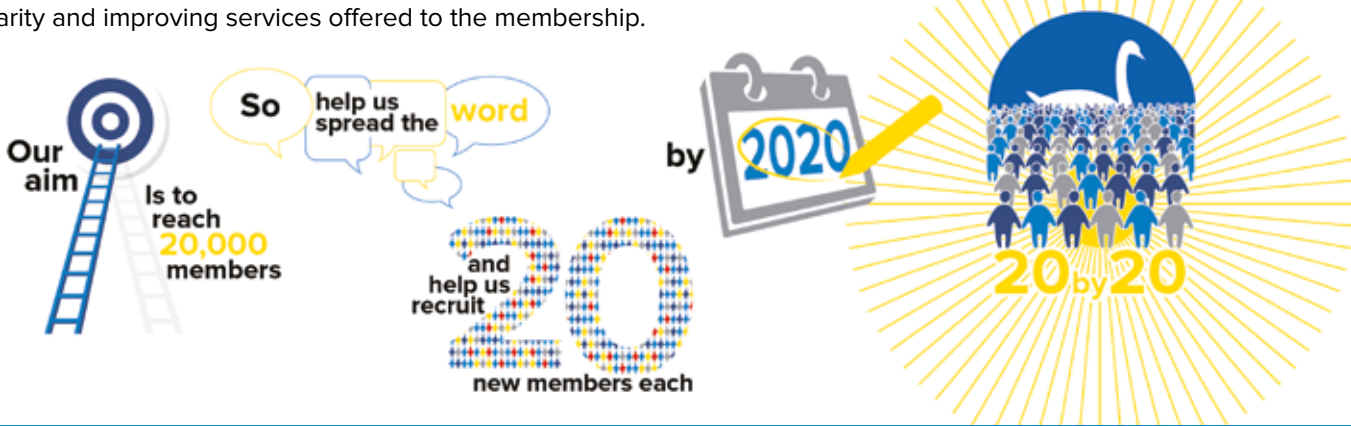
Age of WAY members:



The WAY Forward – WAY's Initial 2020 Strategy

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 2016 and 2017 are based on increasing awareness of the charity and improving services offered to the membership.



Short-term Goals

2015

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.
2. Membership retention of 75%.
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.
4. Arranging of 4 regional volunteer meetings with the Operations Team to discuss issues and share best practice.
5. Plan for a WAY conference in 2016, approximately six months after the AGM for topics that time at the AGM does not allow.
6. Membership goal for the end of 2015 to be 2,000 members with a push target of 2,500 members.
7. Policies and procedures to be updated to ensure they are fit for purpose and in line with the ethos of the charity.
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.

2016

1. Hold the first WAY conference.
2. Plan and develop two conferences for 2017.
3. Plan the 20 year anniversary events for WAY.
4. Membership target of 5,000 members.
5. Continue to develop the four volunteer meetings.
6. Increase the Operations Team by addition of a full time Fundraising/Events Manager. Apply for funding from external sources to this post.

2017

1. 20th year anniversary celebrations.
2. Increase membership to 8,000.



WAY Widowed & Young



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