WAY

Widowed & Young

Annual Report 2012

Charity ID 1072649

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Principal Activities

WAY Widowed & Young was formed 15 years ago with the intention of supporting those widowed young (at 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 Facebook page to provide up-to-date information on WAY and current issues;
- Opportunities for members to meet others in the same situation, either face to face through organised meetings, holidays or at the AGM, or online via a private Facebook site.

To raise awareness of issues affecting those widowed young, WAY campaigns on current issues and seeks opportunities to publicise the existence of the charity.

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

2012 has been another busy year for WAY – with holidays, social events and, of course, our AGM. We have also seen a big increase in the number of posts on our Facebook group which we hope has led to the start of many lasting friendships between our members.

WAY was started in 1997 and has operated in a similar way ever since then, by members for members. The committee is aware that as we grow larger as an organisation we need to become more professional. We estimate that there are 100,000 people who have been widowed at 50 or under who might benefit from joining WAY. If we are to reach those eligible and indeed cope with that many members we need to change the way that we operate. WAY has agreed with the NCVO to provide a trustee training day to enable the committee to start exploring the changes needed in our operations. As WAY continues to grow as well as looking at the committee structure we need to be aware of how we manage the charity. All of our volunteers are WAY members so therefore are widowed themselves. Many are single parents struggling to hold down jobs whilst caring for their children and dealing with their own grief at the same time. This means that often we don't provide what is expected of us. We are at a crossroads and we need to seriously consider the funding of staff to manage WAY so that we are not always reliant on volunteers who through no fault of their own can't always give what they have promised.

WAY is the charity no one wants to be eligible to join, but once they have people are very glad they have found us. If we are to reach even a fraction of the 100,000 eligible widow(er)s we need to be smart about raising our profile. Over the last year I have met people from many other organisations such as Cruse, Childhood Bereavement Network, Gingerbread, and The Funeral Directors association. These organisations are all in contact with potential members and have promised to promote WAY within their organisations. This needs to continue to happen as this is the best way to get WAY's name out there.

To help raise awareness we have changed our name from The WAY Foundation to WAY Widowed and Young. This was because many people were confused about what the letters WAY actually stand for and the 'foundation' tag has led to confusion that we as an organisation have money to donate to other causes.

Having reached the crossroads, I am confident that WAY is now on course to establish itself as a stable, professionally managed charity to support its expanding membership in the years ahead.

Georgia Elms

Organisation and Governance

The WAY Committee had 12 elected members in 2012 who met four times in the year including the AGM.

There is a network of Regional and Area co-ordinators with the aim of covering all areas of the country, including Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. All roles, apart from one part-time administrative post, are voluntary. This keeps administration costs down but can be problematic when all volunteers are, by nature of being members of the charity, dealing with their own grief and life-changing issues. We cannot always therefore provide all of our members with the level of support they would like.

A key aim for the future is to secure the level of funding and sponsorship necessary to underpin the employment of more paid staff.

2012 Achievements

Support Network:

- Introduced a regional contact network to provide support and training to area co-ordinators and to encourage others to step in to the role;
- Held an area co-ordinator meeting to share ideas on best practice and to provide encouragement for the individuals in those roles;
- Provided Facebook support to those organising events and other activities.

Holidays:

Holidays – from an overnight stay to a week abroad – can have a significant impact on those members attending. The amount of administration involved for Way can vary from full booking of events and recharging to members (eg ski-ing) to advising of venue and date and members booking individually (eg Egypt). In all cases, members benefit greatly from knowing they are going to be with others in the same situation. In many cases widow(er)s will be taking their first holiday as a single parent, and dealing with logistics of getting their family to the destination. This can be discussed and often shared with other members. Once on holiday, other members understand that it is hard to see other families enjoying themselves and that sometimes a 'time-out' is needed.

In 2012 we secured funding from the Comasonic Benevolent Fund of £3,500, which was to be used for the benefit of our members' children. We decided that this should be spent on providing free children's places on a Way activity weekend, planned to take place in 2013. It is hoped to secure funding to make this an annual event.

We also decided to make a contribution towards a weekend being organised for Way members to Horsewyse, who work with families and siblings with emotional, behavioural or social difficulties or with confidence, anger or anxiety issues.

The year commenced with the Way annual ski trip, which this year was to Italy. This was followed by a weekend in Whinfell Forest Centerparcs in January.

Members escaped the dismal weather with a trip to Hurghada in Egypt during the Easter holidays and other members visited Canada, took part in a cycling/barge holiday from Bruges to Amsterdam and a return visit to Bruges in November to visit the Christmas markets.

Father's Day is a particularly difficult time of year for our members, and our Way Father's Day weekend in Christchurch, Dorset has always been a well-attended event. This year we hosted a Father's Day weekend in Ashbourne, Derbyshire – the children had a great time despite the weather being rather cold and exceptionally windy.

Centerparcs at Sherwood Forest at the end of October was again the biggest Way event we hosted with around 400 Way members and their children attending. Attendance at the event grows each year. Way members enjoyed Paintballing, Laser Quest, a bowling tournament, cycle rides, spa sessions, yoga, the Way Kids Olympics and the Party in the Park. An acoustic jamming session was organised for the Sunday evening whilst the children enjoyed Halloween by 'trick or treating' between the villas.

The Scottish Way weekend in September moved to Pitlochry in 2012, having been in New Lanark for the previous two years. This meant that more Way members could be accommodated.

AGM 2012:

The AGM in 2012 took place in Bristol in March. Over 100 members attended and enjoyed presentations from members of the Committee, area contacts and from the civil servant leading the 'Tell Us Once' campaign.

It was decided to venture outside of England for 2013, and the AGM for 2013 will take place in Edinburgh.

Longer Term Development for Way:

Way Website

Following extensive work on putting together a system proposal and investigating potential suppliers, the decision was made to go with Acid Yellow as the provider for our new website. The new website will comprise public pages with information on who we are and what we do, together with links to other organisations and guidance on early stages of bereavement and how families and friends can help, together with a members only section. Members will be given a unique login to access this section. It will include an online chat room, an events planning and booking facility and the ability to search for other members in a given area. It will also improve administration by allowing online registration and automating renewal reminders, and members will be suspended from the members only section if they do not renew.

We have agreed a Memorandum of Understanding with Acid Yellow and work is underway on the new system.

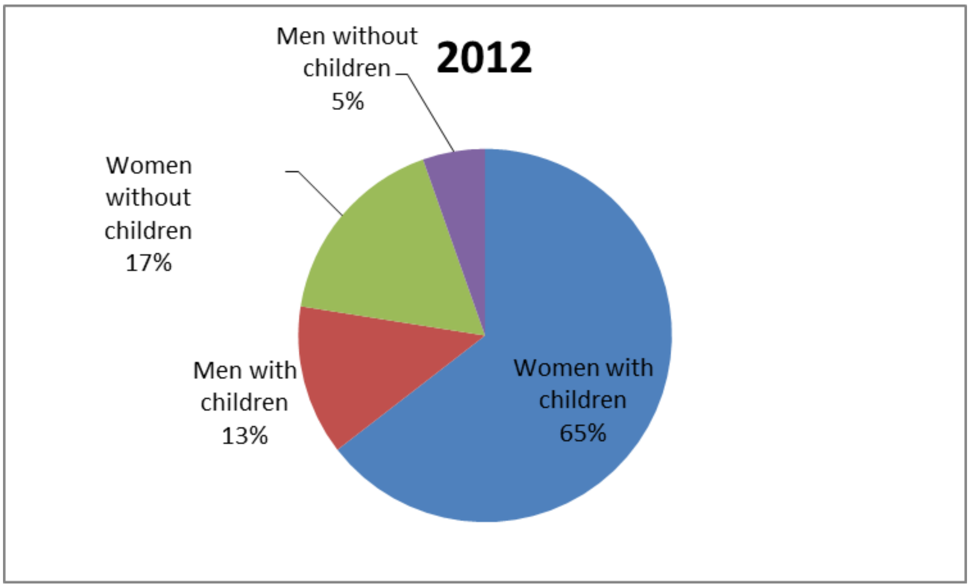
Promotion of Way

In 2012 it was agreed to fund some PR activity with Marketsquare, a small team of communication specialists. They have been tasked with increasing awareness of Way in various areas and to look at ways in which we may be able to attract corporate sponsorship or funding or to create a partnership with other organisations.

We have also been seeking corporate sponsorship from Aviva.

Impact

By the end of 2012 WAY had 1,313 members. The breakdown of the membership is shown below:



These proportions remain largely unchanged from the previous year.

During the year the membership increased by a net 11 members. There were 718 members who renewed their membership during the year, and 603 new members joined. However, 614 members did not renew their membership. This is the usual pattern of membership during the year.

Exact membership numbers are open to some interpretation as the charity tends 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. Accordingly members are allowed an extended period before they are officially removed from the current members system.

At the moment WAY has no automatic notification of renewal or follow-up system to ensure members renew or are removed from the database. The new website (see Longer Term Development – Way Website above) and associated membership 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

Total income and expenditure for 2012 compared to the previous year is shown below:

	2012	2011
Income	**£**	**£**
Members subscriptions	11,908	11,980
Members renewals	12,370	10,533
Donations - Victim Support		15,000
Donations - General	11,775	9,849
Fundraising	7,191	3,887
Bank Interest	333	280
Gift Aid	7,223	2,527
AGM 2013	21,991	
AGM 2012	4,406	14,457
AGM 2011		5,195
Holidays	30	368
TOTAL Income	**77,227**	**74,076**
Expenditure	**£**	**£**
Telecoms and Website	(3,513)	(3,563)
Advertising and promotion	(15,364)	(6,493)
Postage	(1,684)	(2,475)
Staff Costs	(10,475)	(10,442)
Committee Expenses	(2,523)	(1,460)
Merchandise	(1,171)	
Grants to local groups	(108)	(330)
Holidays	(1,106)	(1,701)
AGM 2013	(1,000)	
AGM 2012	(18,814)	(1,177)
AGM 2011		(19,720)
Database	(6,705)	
Fees	(907)	(892)
Bank Charges	(30)	(18)
Insurance	(439)	(387)
Audit Fees	(110)	(165)
Prior Year Adjustment	(375)	(198)
Other	(1,276)	(2,695)
Total Expenditure	**(65,600)**	**(51,716)**
Net (deficit)/surplus for the year	**11,627**	**22,360**

The increase in expenditure year on year was due to employing Marketsquare to undertake promotional activity, and for the initial payment to Acid Yellow for the development of the new website and database.

Members continued to raise funds for WAY. We had individuals running the London Marathon and doing tandem parachute jumps. We received a donation from a member whose family and friends had organised a golf day in memory of her husband, and one remarrying member asked for contributions to Way in lieu of wedding presents.

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

	2012		2011	
CURRENT ASSETS	**£**	**£**	**£**	**£**
Lloyds Bank Current Account	17,628		9,468	
Less Uncleared (Cheques)/Credits	0		(1,616)	
		17,628		7,852
Co-Operative Bank Current Account	48,381		34,722	
Less Uncleared (Cheques)/Credits	0		1,808	
		48,381		36,530
Lloyds Bank Fixed Term Deposit				
Principality Fixed Term Deposits		15,000		25,000
TOTAL Assets		**81,009**		**69,382**
FINANCED BY:				
Accumulated Surplus Brought Forward		69,382		47,021
Net (Deficit)/Surplus for the Year		11,627		22,361
		81,009		**69,382**