



Annual Report
2023

**Speaking Up and
Breaking Down Barriers since 1986**

Introduction



Our Way Self Advocacy 2022/2023

A message from Our Way's Manager

I would like to start by thanking everyone for being so supportive and welcoming of me to my new role as Manager. Although I have been part of Our Way for a number of years, it has been a big change, and at times very daunting, but with all of your support we have got through it. Luckily, Catherine is never far away and always on hand for support and guidance, so a big thank-you to her!!

This year has seen our numbers increase at many of our sessions. It has been a very busy year, with lots of walks and trips, encouraging our members to have new experiences, and share some of theirs with others.

Although some of our funding streams have come to an end we have been successful with a grant of £5000 to produce a booklet around keeping safe in the community and deterring crime, as-well as £3,800 from North Worcestershire Hate Crime to continue the fantastic Safe Places work we do, and we continue to put in applications.

The gardening project has continued to thrive and we now visit Berrington court regularly to help them maintain their grounds. A few of our gardeners have also branched out, and now visit less able people to help them maintain and stay on top of their gardens, such great teamwork.

Our Summer ball moved back to Venue 45 Live this year and we welcomed the band 'Eastwood' who were a great success.

We have welcomed some new trustees, who have come in with fresh ideas, and have really taken to their roles.

I feel, as I hope you do also, that this has been a successful year, and I look forward to many more.

Cat Bennett—Manager

Who's who at Our Way Self Advocacy

Staff



Cat Bennett
Manager



Caroline Jones
Development Worker
(Stars)
(Young People)



Selina Tipper
Administrator



Catherine Quekett
Sessional Worker



Katrina Pannell
Sessional Worker
(Young Peoples Club)

Board of Trustees 2022- 2023



Ray Gallier
(Chairman)



Linda Bullock
(Secretary)



Marsha White
(Treasurer)



Carolyn Ayres



Janet Jones



John Lawley



Murray Roy



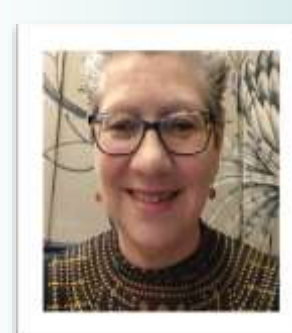
Natalie Dixon



Sue Houghton



Tracey James



Vikki Vincent

Message from the Chair

This year has been a busy year again for Our Way, with lots of trips, walks, workshops and groups for us all to take part in. At the beginning of the year we visited Harry Potter world which was a great day out where we found out lots of secrets about the filming world.

We said goodbye to Catherine as our Manager, although she is still able to support us at sessions and is very much still a part of Our Way, and welcomed Cat into her new role.

I would like to thank all our volunteers for the support and time that they give us, as well as the paid staff team for all their hard work and dedication.

We have welcomed new trustee and treasurer Marsha who is doing a fantastic job, and I would like to thank all our other trustees for their continued support.

I look forward to the coming year.

Ray Gallier
Chair of Trustees

Volunteers



Adam Mytton



Becci Wykes



Ben Bennett



Carolyn Ayres



Catherine Quekett



Chris Puttock



Gary Martin



George Mytton



James Keighley



Kevin Eades



Lin Bullock



Marsha White



Michelle Martin



Nick Clark

Young People's Group

The young peoples group has been getting busier and busier with our numbers increasing every month. We are visited most weeks by Russell House, who come to participate in the weekly activities which include games, cooking, arts and crafts and gives the young people the important opportunity to socialise with their friends in a safe environment away from school and their parents and or carers.

Wyre forest School visit us weekly on a Thursday where we run an activity with them and gives them the opportunity to do some travel training.

We also visit Russell house every month to run either an arts and crafts or cooking activity.

Throughout the school holidays the young people enjoyed trips to the Safari Park, Crazy Golf, Laser Tag, Archery and Climbing, Stourport Fair, Swimming, Bowling, BBQ's and Cooking at Youth House,

(Funded by BBC Children in Need)



Self Advocacy Groups

The Self Advocacy Group has continued to meet weekly, discussing topics around care, safe places, hate and mate crime, and other relevant subjects. We have also enjoyed some art and crafts, cooking, bingo, games and karaoke sessions



Ladies' and Men's Group

Both Ladies and Men's group meet monthly. Meetings reflect the aspirations and needs of the group, health, creative crafts, and visits to local attraction have been some of the chosen topics and activities discussed and chosen



West Midlands Self Advocacy Network

The West Midlands Self Advocacy Network is made up of 6 self-Advocacy groups from across the West Midlands. It has continued to widen its horizons by raising issues and sharing the experiences and voices of self-advocates. Their projects this year have been Banking, Hate Crime, Health, and inclusive communities. Link Workers Stuart and Matt have been able to further develop connections with organisations and professionals by presenting findings at meetings and conferences



Members of the Network at a meeting at Youth House

BILD for the Future



BILD for the future forum representing the voices of self-advocates from around the country has met monthly talking about and addressing issues of importance such as health, relationships, and inclusion. Lara and John have worked hard to ensure that Our Way members views are shared and heard. In May their work was recognized when they were invited to a garden Party at Buckingham Palace where they met members of the Royal family which included King Charles and Queen Camila

The Housing Project

This year we have continued to support people with their housing needs. Our Members have moved in to supported accommodation, independent living in both privately rented and housing association accommodation and shared houses.

We have supported people to get the right support and care set up and in place, for them to live as independently as possible. This has included Universal Credit and PIP claims, utility bills, overcoming and repaying debts, setting up appointees and Personal Assistants.

The Housing project funding came to an end in April. Although we still intend to support our members with their housing needs and continue to look for new funding options.

*Jeremy: ' **Our Way have done a fantastic job at helping me move into my new home, and I look forward to staying here for the rest of my life. I really love it here!!** '*

*Adam: '**Really good support, with moving in, bills, getting my support set up. Things weren't good at home at the time when I moved, but with having my own space my relationships have improved. Since I have moved in my landlord has changed as my flat was sold, but Our Way supported me through the whole process, helping me to understand what was happening, building the relationship with my new landlord and kept me calm. If I have any worries or concerns I know I can always go and speak to one of the staff at Our Way**'*



Georgia at her new home
in
Kidderminster



Hamish in his new shared
accommodation



Jeremy in his new
flat in Kidderminster

Stars in the Sky

This year members have enjoyed trips and walks weekly. These have all been suggestions from members, and have included Warner Brothers Studio Tours, The home of Harry Potter, Crazy Golf, West Midlands Safari Park, Waterworld, Rowing down the River Seven, Stourport Fair, Ludlow Market, Pantomime, Victorian Market, Karting, Shrewsbury Prison, Climbing, Archery, and Laser Tag.



Harry Potter



Canoeing



Cooking



Shrewsbury Prison



Sport Sessions



Malvern Theatre
Pantomime



Worcester
Victorian Market



Mulligans Golf

Stars in the Sky Continued

Some of our walks have included Bodenham Arboretum, Botanical Gardens, Habberly Valley, Springfield Park, Hartlebury Common, Brintons Park, Wyre Forest, and Sanders Park in Bromsgrove



Bodenham Arboretum



Springfield Walk



Ludlow Market & Walk



Bromsgrove Walk



Habberley Valley



Climbing



Waterworld



BBQ



Brintons Park



Cozy Cafe



Stourport Fair



Go Karting

Gardening Project

Throughout the year Our way Gardeners have been kept busy ensuring seeds are sown and vegetables are planted and harvested. In the vegetable patch, we have added a raised flower bed which has been turned into a memorial garden

In addition to looking after the KDYT garden, the gardening team are now weekly visitors to Berrington Court where they help residents keep the grounds and gardens neat and tidy



Art in the Woods with Barbara

During the year Barbara has provided an art workshop. We visited the Wyre Forest and Barbara's studio, where we were inspired by nature to create some natural art.



Zumba & Coffee Morning

Thursday Morning is Zumba and Coffee Morning in the Our Way calendar, they have both continued to grow. Members are able to meet here to chat, play games and access support. Some members have taken the opportunity to meet other professionals here as they feel so comfortable. Members access the garden, and can share what has been produced.



Our Way Sports

Sunday mornings inclusive football training sessions at the Wyre Forest Leisure centre have been very popular and welcoming new players of all ages.

Our Way's partnership with Cookley FC has continued to develop. We have been made to feel very welcome and have enjoyed our friendly matches with them. In October we signed up to the 3 counties league and played our first competitive matches wearing our new Our Way -Cookley shirts at Worcester University.

Thank you to coaches Adam, Kev, and George for all their help and support



Football training at Wyre Forest Leisure Centre

Safe Places

Safe Places aims to provide place of safety for anyone who finds themselves in a vulnerable situation when out and about in their community. Our Way members and volunteers have continued to visit their local high streets promoting and recruiting new Safe Places



Relationship Workshops

This year we have run a number of Relationship Workshops, helping our members to navigate their way around appropriate and healthy relationships and friendships. During these sessions we were able to welcome a number of visitors including Kate Wilson, our local sexual health nurse.

Our DY10 Nightclub evenings have continued to welcome high numbers, with members traveling from Redditch, Worcester and Bromsgrove to join our themed evenings!!

We also welcomed Dudley Voices for Choice who are hoping to start their own Nightclub evenings in Dudley, and wanted to see what was working well at Our Way!!



Summer Ball

Our Summer Ball returned to Venue 45 Live this year, with a live band. The evening was a great success, and everyone that attended had a fantastic time, and we made £100 on the raffle!!





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