



# Annual Report 2020

**Speaking up for ourselves and  
breaking down barriers**

## Introduction

### Our Way Self Advocacy 2019/2020



#### **A message from Our Way's Manager**

What an extraordinary year 2020 has been! With the lockdown in March we had to quickly change the way we work. We have offered a timetable of Zoom sessions to help our members keep in touch with each other. Although it was difficult for many people to use technology, and some needed new tablets and wifi to join us, we have had amazing attendance throughout the pandemic.

Thanks to Louis for the Zoom Zumba sessions – six a week in the early months; they kept us fit and gave us a routine to our week. Our Coffee Mornings have regularly attracted around 25 people a week and our Men's Group, Ladies' Group sessions and Young People's Group have been fun and thought provoking. We've played games and quizzes and had lots of discussions.

When the first lockdown lifted, we were able to start meeting face to face outdoors. Our social distancing walks have been very popular and our footballers and rugby players were pleased to start training again.

Our new gardening project, which makes use of the land at the back of Youth House, has been a great success and I am sure we will have lots of tasty vegetables next year.

Keeping in contact with friends has been so important this year. It has helped people to feel less isolated and lonely. Talking through our anxieties has made things feel less difficult.

Thank you to all who have helped get us through, that includes staff, volunteers, trustees, KDYT and members themselves who have been amazing in the way they have supported each other.

Catherine Quekett  
Manager

# Who's who at Our Way Self Advocacy

## Staff



**Catherine Quekett**  
Manager



**Caroline Jones**  
Development  
Worker



**Margaret Groome**  
Administrator/  
Facilitator



**Cat Bennett**  
Development Worker  
(Housing)  
(Young People)



**John Entwistle**  
Sessional Worker



**Chris Millington**  
Facilitator  
(Shoot for the Stars)

## Board of Trustees 2019 - 2020



**John Lawley**  
(Chairman)



**Linda Bullock**  
(Secretary)



**Jerry Conway**  
(Treasurer)



**Ray Gallier**



**Sue Houghton**



**Jan Calvert**



**Lisa Stokes**



**Stuart Moore**



**Alison Price**



**Aimee Smith**

### Message from the Chair

It has been an interesting and, at times, difficult year.

It's been good that I have been able to stay in touch with Our Way members through our Zoom sessions. More recently I have enjoyed the gardening project and self-distancing walks around the county.

I am looking forward to next year as the garden project is really taking off. I have been growing peas, spinach and cabbages in my greenhouse for planting on our vegetable patch at the back of Youth House. I have enjoyed constructing the wooden surrounds for the plots.

The trustees have continued to meet, but on Zoom, rather than in person. I have been chair of trustees for 6 years and have decided to step down. I am sure that the new chair, Lisa Stokes, will do an excellent job in my place.

I have enjoyed being chair and representing Our Way at all sorts of forums and will continue to play a part as a trustee on the board.

I would like to thank the trustees, staff and volunteers for all their hard work and commitment.

John Lawley  
Chair

## Volunteers



**Lin Bullock**



**Jerry Conway**



**Sue Houghton**



**Jan Calvert**



**Shirley Hughes**



**Debbie Mann**



**Tanya Sinden**



**Carolyn Ayres**



**Nick Clarke**



**Charlotte Jones**



**Julia Tacey**



**Ben Bennett**

## Self Advocacy Groups

Our Way Self Advocacy groups continued to meet weekly at Kidderminster Youth House up until Lockdown.

During Lockdown, although we were unable to go out and about, members continued to make sure their voices were heard and shared their views and experiences with other members.

They have taken part in a variety of surveys and completed questionnaires for the University of Central London, Health Watch, Learning Disability England and Worcestershire People's Parliament.



*John and Nisha taking part in the University of Central London survey*

## Young People's Groups

The Young People's group met weekly before Lockdown where they had the chance to be creative, share their interests and have lots of fun taking part in their chosen activities, such as cooking, crafts and games.

During Lockdown members kept in touch on Zoom.

In the summer, after Lockdown, members were able to enjoy activities such as crazy golf, laser tag and exploring the Habberley Valley trail.

*(Funded by BBC Children in Need)*



*Crazy Golf, Worcester*

## Young People's Groups Cont'd



*Habberley Trail*

*Laser Tag, Stottesden*



*Stourport*

## Shoot for the Stars

Shoot for the Stars is an advocacy group for young people based in Tenbury. It is a fun and exciting group based on the idea of making friends and speaking about the things that members think are important.

Chris Millington, the facilitator of the group, kept in touch with Shoot for the Stars members throughout Lockdown.

They met up after Lockdown and enjoyed some woodcraft.

[\(Funded by BBC Children in Need\)](#)



*Shoot for the Stars members enjoying some woodcraft*

## Young Leaders Award

The achievements of Aaron as an Our Way Young Consulter were recognised when he was awarded a Young Leaders Award by the magazine 'Tomorrow's Leaders'.

Well done Aaron.



*Aaron*

## West Midlands Self Advocacy Network

In January, Stuart and Matt were employed as Link Workers for the West Midlands Self Advocacy Network.

They have joined a team of fellow self advocates from across the region to find out and voice issues of importance.

During the year they have spoken about health, human rights and transport.



*Matt and Stuart*

## Young Solutions Volunteer of the Year Award

Our dedicated volunteer, Debbie, was awarded a Young Solutions Volunteer of the Year Award.

Debbie regularly joins the Young People's Group and Wednesday night Advocacy Groups and helps members with craft and cooking activities.

During Lockdown she cooked meals and dropped them off to some of our members.



*Debbie with her Award*

## Keeping Safe

Keeping safe continues to be a high priority. During the year we have strived to promote this.

We have worked with West Mercia IAG and attended North and South Worcestershire Hate Crime forums.

During Hate Crime Awareness week we held discussion groups to raise awareness of hate crime.



## Counselling

This year we have again been able to offer counselling services to our members.

Covid 19 and Lockdown has made many members very anxious this year, and there has been a greater need than ever for counselling.

We have been lucky this year to have had the services of two counsellors to offer counselling to our members.



*Dave Latham*



*Marilyn Foxall*

## Housing Project

We have received 17 new referrals into the housing project (although these are not all people wanting to move) which leaves us working with 33 people currently within the housing project.

Support currently includes challenging incorrect utility bills, looking for more suitable accommodation, weekly bidding, getting more suitable support in place long term and supporting setting up utility bills and benefits once a move has taken place.

Throughout Lockdown we have been supporting people with any issues or concerns they may have regarding their tenancies and accommodation. These have been things such as neighbour disputes, utility bills and mental health.

Once Lockdown eased we have supported the move of 4 individuals. One of these has been into supported accommodation, and 3 into private rented accommodation.'



*Nathan and Tamsin  
moving into their  
new home*

## Stars in the Sky

Our Way and Stars in the Sky members come from all over the county and beyond. Throughout the year we have strived to ensure everyone has been able to keep in contact and maintain their friendships.

Towards the end of 2019 we spent a magical day at the Harry Potter Studios in Watford. It was a trip many members had been looking forward to for ages, and we were not disappointed.



*Harry Potter Studios*

At the end of 2019 we celebrated Christmas with a trip to Gloucester Docks to do some Christmas shopping, a Christmas crafts event and our Christmas party.



*Gloucester Docks*



*Christmas Crafts*



*Christmas Party*

We were able to get some events in at the beginning of the year before Lockdown started.

Events included Go Karting in Stourbridge, a trip to the Cotswold Wildlife Park, a Meet and Greet night and a Quiz Night.

## Stars in the Sky Continued



*Cotswold Wildlife Park*



*Quiz Night*



*Meet and Greet*

During Lockdown we got together on Zoom. Our Zoom meetings included 6 Zumba sessions a week, a Challenge session, an online Coffee Shop, a Men's Group, a Ladies' Group and a Guided Meditation session.

When Lockdown eased we were able to get together on some socially distanced walks and outdoor activities.



## Gardening Project

During the summer we began a gardening project at Kidderminster Youth House. Members worked together to clear and create an inclusive and engaging garden, building raised beds and garden furniture.

Thank you to KDYT for letting us use the land.



*The site before we got started*



*Preparing the ground*



*Collecting Manure*



*Planting vegetables*



*David connecting a water butt*



*Scott sitting on the bench that he made for the garden.*



*Members sanding the bench down ready to be painted with preservative.*

## Our Way Sports

This year sporting opportunities have been limited due to Covid 19. However, where possible, we have continued to run weekly football sessions at the Wyre Forest Leisure Centre and support members to participate in weekly rugby training sessions at Worcester Warriors.



*Football training at Wyre Forest Leisure Centre*



*Rugby training at Worcester Warriors*

## Safe Place Scheme

We continue to promote and support the Worcestershire Safe Place scheme. However, this has proved to be a challenge with the Lockdown restrictions.



## Coffee Shop

The coffee mornings continued to be a great success up until Lockdown in March, with lots of people coming along every Thursday morning to spend a couple of relaxing hours chatting to friends and playing games.

We are still having coffee mornings every Thursday, but from the comfort of our homes using Zoom.



Members can't wait until it is safe to return to the coffee shop at Youth House and see all their friends face to face.

## Support Work

As our projects and group activities have evolved so has our delivery of one to one support given to members. During the past 12 months we have endeavoured to work closely with members, helping them to maintain healthy and safe lifestyles. This has included support with household tasks, correspondence, finances, benefits and health issues.

## DY10 Nightclub

The DY10 nightclub provides an opportunity for members to have a nightclub experience with friends in a safe and engaging environment.

Due to Covid we haven't be able to hold one since before Lockdown but are looking forward to starting them again when it is safe to do so.



## Thank You's

Thank you so much to all our volunteers for all your hard work. We appreciate everything you do for Our Way.

Thank you to KDYT for your continued support.

Jerry Conway joined the board of trustees in 2013/2014 and became treasurer in 2014/2015. He has now decided to stand down as a trustee. We would like to thank Jerry for his help and expertise over the years.

Hopefully we will still be seeing a lot of Jerry as he does lots of voluntary work for us. He helps out at the coffee shop, volunteers his time on walks and at the men's group.

Thank you Jerry.



## Thank You and Goodbye

During the past seven years Chris has been a dedicated worker and volunteer.

He has facilitated the Shoot for the Stars advocacy group in Tenbury and has also coached the Our Way football teams.

He has strived to motivate and inspire others to participate in new opportunities and try new skills.



Chris is now moving on to pastures new and we would like to thank him for all his hard work and wish him well for the future.

## Our Way Money

### Funders

Awards for All  
Children in Need  
Comic Relief  
Groundworks UK  
Lloyds Bank Foundation  
Malvern Hills District Council  
The National Lottery Community Fund  
Worcestershire Community Foundation



### Donations

Sue Houghton  
Carol Griffin  
Monday Night Group  
PayPal

A big thank you to everyone who has donated money to Our Way.



**Our Way Self Advocacy  
Youth House  
Bromsgrove Street  
Kidderminster  
Worcestershire  
DY10 1PF**

**Tel: 01562 820262  
E-mail: [office@ourway.org.uk](mailto:office@ourway.org.uk)  
[www.ourway.org.uk](http://www.ourway.org.uk)**

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