



Annual Report 2021

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

Introduction

Our Way Self Advocacy 2020/2021



A message from Our Way's Manager

We have had another extraordinary and at times difficult year. Two more lockdowns, vaccinations, and some cases of Covid 19. We continued to provide zoom sessions during lockdowns as well as social distancing walks for members to keep fit and see their friends. When restrictions were lifted we resumed more face-to-face activities like football and rugby.

We are very aware that many people's mental health and confidence levels have been badly affected by the pandemic. Giving members the opportunity to talk about their fears and providing clear information about the rules was very important. Keeping in touch has again been key to reducing those feelings of isolation and loneliness.

During the year members have further developed our gardening project producing tomatoes, spinach, courgettes, runner beans and pumpkins.

A big change this year for Our Way has been the retirement of Margaret Groome who had been our administrator for many years. She was also the lead person for our popular coffee mornings and her lovely sandwiches are much missed by all!

In July we welcomed Selina Tipper as our new administrator and valued member of the staff team.

Thanks again to all who have continued to help us through such difficult times, that includes staff, volunteers, trustees, KDYT and members themselves.

Catherine Quekett
Manager

Who's who at Our Way Self Advocacy

Staff



Catherine Quekett
Manager



Caroline Jones
Development Worker



Margaret Groome
Administrator



Cat Bennett
Development Worker
(Housing)
(Young People)



John Entwistle
Sessional Worker



Selina Tipper
Administrator



Katrina Pannell
Youth Worker

Board of Trustees 2020 - 2021



**John Lawley
(Chairman)**



**Linda Bullock
(Secretary)**



Stuart Moore



Ray Gallier



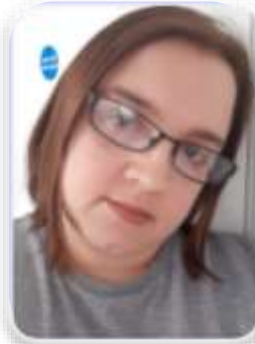
Sue Houghton



Jan Calvert



Lisa Stokes



Beth Craven



Alison Price



Aimee Smith

Message from the Chair

It has been another at times difficult year but things have started to get better.

We are doing many more of our activities face-to-face.

I particularly enjoyed our trips out and our Coffee mornings. Its been good to see friends in person, instead of on zoom.

I took over as Chair of Trustees a couple of months ago and would like to thank Lisa Stokes for her work as the previous chair.

This year Stuart Moore, Lisa Stokes and Jan Calvert have decided to step down as Trustees I would like to thank them for their time on the board and welcome our new Trustee Beth Craven.

We are all looking forward to the Christmas Party this year—we missed not having one during the pandemic!

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

Ray Gallier

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

Wednesday night Self Advocacy Group had a welcome return in September providing a opportunity for members to share their news and discuss matters of importance. We have also enjoyed some special themed nights such as a Halloween pumpkin carving and a bread baking session.



Ladies' and Men's Group

Our Way Ladies' and Men's groups have met monthly, getting together to talk about chosen topics and enjoy activities. A visit to The Melting Pot in Bewdley proved to be a very popular and creative session for the ladies. The men's group spent a morning kayaking and paddleboarding at the Stottesdon Activity Centre.



Young People's Group

The Young People's group have met weekly throughout the year. At the start of the year these meetings were via zoom but returned to face-to-face once covid restrictions were lifted.

Monday night sessions have provided opportunities for young people to meet with their friends and to share and take part in lots of activities such as cooking, gaming and arts and crafts.

During the school holidays we have organised a variety of activities, including days out to different attractions such as the West Midlands Safari Park, bowling, golf and archery.

We have also been able to keep in contact via Zoom or face-to-face with our friends from the Wyre Forest School, Russell House and the Vale of Evesham school, who have shared news of their school activities and experiences.



West Midlands Self Advocacy Network

Matt and Stuart have had a busy year working with their colleagues from The West Midlands Self Advocacy Forum. Together they have completed many different projects, raising awareness of issues that are of importance to our members such as friendships, transport and mental health. Most of the meetings have been via Zoom but in August, Our Way were very happy to host the Forum's first face-to-face meeting since February 2020.



Matt and Stuart receiving their awards

BILD for the Future

John and Lara have been meeting monthly on Zoom with fellow BILD for the Future members where they have been able to contribute to many different topics for discussion around Inclusion and engagement.

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 and there has been a greater need than ever for counselling.

We have been fortunate to have the funding again this year, to employ the services of our two counsellors to offer free counselling to our members.



Dave Latham



Marilyn Foxall

Housing Project

2021 has been a busy year for the housing project.

We have received 14 new referrals, coming from a variety of sources, including self-referrals, Social workers, and family carers.

We have successfully supported 10 people with their move into new accommodation. A further 2 people have been helped to access the long-term support they needed in order for them to continue with their tenancies successfully.

Our project is currently supporting 26 people with their housing needs.

We have had some fantastic feedback about the service. Here is a quote highlighting one family's experience.

'We could not have taken this step without Our Way and we are so grateful that we have such a super organisation in Kidderminster to help people and families like us. I would have no hesitation in recommending them.'

We look forward to the next year, and many more successes to come



Ray moving into his new flat

Stars in the Sky

At the start of the year technology and zoom played an important role and was the platform for most of our activities

Gradually with the easing of covid restrictions we have been able to once again meet face-to-face and participate in enjoying activities and visits including, Drayton Manor, Laser Tag, Stratford, bowling and crazy golf.



Drayton Manor



Stars in the Sky Continued

Throughout the year Our Way members have discovered and enjoyed many walks across Worcestershire., including Sanders Park in Bromsgrove, Wyre Forest, Springfield Park in Kidderminster, The Lido Park in Droitwich, Malvern Hills and Bodenham Arboretum.



Spennells Valley



Bewdley



Brinton's Park & Canal



Rifle Range



Sanders Park



Wyre Forest



Bodenham Arboretum



Springfield Park and canal walk

Gardening Project

The gardening project has been a hive of activity and has continued to develop and grow. At the start of the year, we planted lots of different plants and vegetables. We looked after them until they were ready to harvest. Members have also used their carpentry skills to make raised beds and planters. Thank you KDYT for their support and help and allowing us to use their grounds.



David planting tomatoes



Adam and John planting the flower beds



Hamish harvesting some Pumpkin's



Jeremy harvesting our courgettes



Our towering sunflowers!

Our Way Sports

It was so good to be able to resume our weekly football training sessions at the Wyre Forest Leisure Centre. In September we welcomed Adam, George and Kevin who have supported and inspired our players with their coaching skills.

This season Galaxy Stars registered with the 3 counties all Ability League and have been able to show their footballing skills by going to tournaments in Worcester, Telford and Hereford.



Football training at Wyre Forest Leisure Centre

Safe Place Scheme

Covid has had a big impact on the Worcestershire Safe Places Scheme with many shops and businesses changing and closing. We are currently identifying and recruiting new Safe Places in Worcestershire to create a new up to date directory.



Coffee Shop

For the first part of the year we continued to have coffee mornings on zoom but since July we have been able to start face-to-face gatherings. We meet in the small sports hall, which gives us more space than our usual upstairs room. We can open the door and let in lots of fresh air to keep us covid safe.



Photography Group

In September we started our popular Photography Club. Each week we have a theme to share our favourite pictures. This takes place during Coffee Mornings every Thursday. Here are some of the group's favourite photos.



Support Work

The one-to-one support that we have offered has flourished over the years with more of our members requesting our support with household tasks, appointments, correspondence, meetings and more. We are constantly reviewing our service and how we can improve by listening to our members needs.

DY10 Nightclub

Although we have not seen the return of DY10 during this year, we hope to re-open in February 2022.



Thank You and Goodbye

This year Margaret Groome retired from her role as Administrator and facilitator. She had worked for Our Way for over 17 years! We wish her well in her retirement and thank her for all her hard work.



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.

Thank You!

Memories Page

Jayne —I really missed Everyone and couldn't wait until Wednesday Night Group started!

Will—I like playing Football on Sunday morning with Adam

Dylan—I've **done so much** since I have joined Our Way. Football, Rugby, Baking and lots of walking. But most of all I met lots of new friends

Jess—I love being able to come to Our Way to meet my friends

Chris C—Drayton Manor and Football are my two favourites

Sam—Good to be back with my friends, especially Zumba and Coffee Mornings

Beth—Zoom sessions kept me in contact with everyone . It was good to get back to in person activities such as Football, Advocacy, walking and Ladies Group

Laura—I've been coming to Our Way for a very long time. When Covid came and stopped everything, I felt **really cut off. It's good that** groups have re-started and we can get together again



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