



# ANNUAL REVIEW - 2019/2020

## A Summary of Activities and Achievements



## INTRODUCTION – CHAIR, PETER JOHNSON

This year has been the story of two halves as they say in football parlance! SWAY has remained active in the South Wight throughout the year, but the nature of its working has changed as the year has progressed in response to the Covid crisis.

It has been a year marked by big plans that, for one reason or another, have had to be shelved or adapted to meet changing circumstances.

Despite these challenging circumstances, we have seen some heart-warming events and promising developments. We believe, as a body of trustees and workers, we have a vital role to play in the lives of young people and their families in the area and in the communities of the South Wight.

In this review you will read of some of these events and developments from a variety of people involved. You will also read of some of our dreams and hopes. You will read of some of the challenges that face us in this difficult and uncertain time too.

I trust you will glimpse that our vision remains undimmed on providing hope and focus for both the young people and families of South Wight. We are committed to the values enshrined in our Christian faith and the compassion expressed in the heart of its founder, Jesus Christ. This is our touchstone and our guide.

So please, pull up a chair and enjoy the story of 2019-2020 in the life of SWAY!

## OUR AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Our aims remain unchanged from last year.

Firstly, to serve the young people of the South Wight by providing activities that stretch them, encourage personal growth and bring them together and developing healthy, positive relationships.

Secondly, to serve the families of our young people, by providing support where needed and help when requested.

All of our engagement, whether with the young people or their families, is guided and motivated by our Christian values and compassion. We aim to meet both young people and their families where they are and, through relationship, seek to serve and help them towards personal growth and stronger community engagement.

# SWAY IN ACTION THROUGH THE YEAR

SWAY has continued to have a rolling programme of engagement throughout the year, despite circumstances. This has involved regular groups that meet throughout the week, either in Niton, Chale Green, Shorwell or Brighstone. It has also involved special events that seek to bring together young people from all areas.

## 1 – Regular Groups

Our regular groups have been Rock Solid in Niton on Mondays for ages 10-12; busy this year with an average attendance of 15 – always a lively and frenetic time. Open House meets on Tuesday evenings at Andy's which seeks to explore areas of faith for young people in a more relaxed and informal setting. This has been very valuable for those who have attended. Chale Drop-in Group on Wednesdays has faltered this year, with fewer attending, partly because of the less than ideal base of the Chale Green Hut, which is past its best and which we will come to later in this Review. Then we have had Roots on Thursday evenings for ages 13-17 in Niton. This has been manic at times but well attended with an average attendance of 14.

Pulse on Fridays in Shorwell has also faltered, partly due to our lack of contact with the School in Brighstone. We have had a few regulars, but we hope to see growth in attendance here as we begin more regular involvement in the school from this September. Attitude in Shorwell for the 13-18s has been steady, with some of our young people reaching the critical ages of 16 and 17. We have seen some excellent volunteering from these young people over the year, which is encouraging – giving back where they have received – a core principle that we try to embody.

## 2 – Special Events

### Celebration Event

We began the year with a Celebration Evening in Niton, where we showcased our trip to the Lakes in August 2019. There was an excellent film (see the film on our website [www.southwightyouth.org](http://www.southwightyouth.org)) that gives some insights into an exciting trip for 17 young people to the World Heritage Centre, that is the Lake District – a great adventure for our young people that stretched them in more ways than one! At this event, our two Gap Years, Luke Distin and Michael Ferguson, were introduced.

### Nitwit

In mid-September we held our first NitWit event in partnership with Niton and Whitwell Parish Council, the Niton-based Go-Kart Day, where young people were encouraged to build and race go-karts down the slope at Niton recreation ground. We are repeating this event this September and are hoping for upto 10 go-karts.

### Harbour connections

As a result of a grant from the Portsmouth C of E Diocese Mission Opportunities Fund, we have funded 3 trips to the mainland for young people to join in youth friendly worship evenings at City Church in Southampton and Harbour Church in Portsmouth. The idea for the grant was to encourage spiritual growth among our young people by exposure to Christian events that would capture their imagination. We took the young people over in the afternoon, dropped into a MacD's or some such place for a bite to eat and then went onto the worship event in the evening. An average of 14

young people engaged in these trips, in October and February to Portsmouth and in November to Southampton. The verdict from the young people was a 'thumbs up'.

## Volunteering

Prior to Christmas our young people were very busy. First the Lantern Parade took place in Niton and involved young people and families in making and parading lanterns through Niton, with the young people volunteering for marshalling the roads. Then the Christmas Tree Festival in Brighstone provided opportunities for young people to help with the manically busy car parking at the IOW Pearl over the weekend of the Festival and providing refreshments at the Annual Stars of Wonder Concert as the climax of the Festival in St Mary's Brighstone. Young people excelled themselves here, as they completed long hours of volunteering.

## Pancakes and Lent

On Pancake Evening young people again volunteered in helping to run a family evening of pancakes and board games in Brighstone that raised £120 for SWAY. During the Lent season, lunch was served by the SWAY young leaders at the Lent Lunch held in Brighstone Methodist Church in early March, again raising around £100 for SWAY.

## Lockdown Zoom

When the end of March came so much

changed, not just for SWAY, but for the whole of the UK and our way of life. Restrictions came in and normal life stopped in a most dramatic and emphatic way. We paused for a moment and then began to formulate a way of working that allowed us to continue our work with young people and their families.

Our regular groups moved to on-line zoom groups. Our family work did the same. Andy and Jennie were making regular contact with folk that allowed some support to be offered in those first, shocked times. For newly isolated young people and families this was crucial.

As the restrictions were reduced slowly, we thought about how we could begin to increase our activity and we came up with some exciting and challenging opportunities.

## Hiking Challenge

First of all, in view of the cancellation of our Lakes Summer Residential (along with much of the rest of our spring and summer plans), we set up the Hiking at Home Challenge in early May. The idea was to climb the height of Scafell Pike by climbing our stairs numerous times over 7 days! We had 18 young people and adults involved in this task. The aim was to raise some money for SWAY and the Isle of Wight Foodbank at the same time. Incredibly we raised £3483 over the week, which was extraordinary. The week reached far and wide on Facebook and created a sense of community amongst the hikers! See the website for the film of the challenge.





Geocaching Challenge



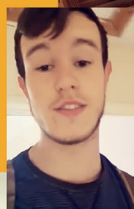
Nitwit



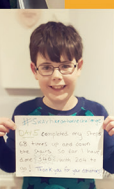
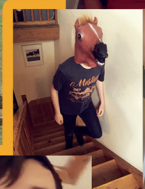
Pancakes and Lent



Geocaching Challenge



Hiking Challenge



## Geocaching Challenge

This was followed in June by our Geocaching Challenge which was enjoyed by around 20 young people and parents. 18 keyrings were placed in various locations around the South Wight and a set of grid references and clues were given out on Sunday evening 14th June. A week was given for entrants to find all 18 keyrings and Amazon vouchers were offered as prizes to the team who found them first. Amazingly, two teams found all keyrings by Wednesday afternoon! Again, those who entered the challenge enjoyed a sense of purpose, found new places and learnt to work together in pursuit of the little keyrings. See the website for the film again!

## Poetry and Cooking Zooms

A couple of zoom groups began in early July to engage and inspire young people and adults. One was a cookery group, where folk were led through various recipes which were followed on-line. This was a lot of fun and the suggestion was that the results be given away to neighbours or someone who would appreciate them (to the disappointment of the immediate family).

The other group was a poetry workshop group where poetry or prose was written, shared and then discussed in a safe and encouraging environment. Some valuable creative writing was seen here. You may well see the fruits of these groups in the next Update and on SWAY's website.

## The Summer Programme

Then came our summer programme, which was somewhat different from

what was originally planned. First, there was the Night Walk from Freshwater Bay to Carisbrooke Castle – a good 12 mile walk enjoyed by 20 young people. Then three sessions kayaking out at Corf on the Newtown Estuary. It was a day under blue skies and summer sunshine – 15 young people experiencing capsizing and frolics in the water here. There was an Orienteering Evening for 4 teams of 4 young people on the Downs above Blackgang – this was terrific fun with the sole group of girls winning the prize of a bag of delicious fruit!

A second day of 11 young people kayaking at the end of August completed the summer fun.

## THE TEAM

The team has grown this year. Andy Dorning leads the Project and has had his hands full adapting to the larger team and the changing circumstances. Jennie Burke has continued her excellent work with families and working alongside her, enjoyed the expertise of Myrena Mercken. Michael Ferguson and Luke Distin, as our Gap Years have given valuable support until they were re-called home at the end of March. We remember, particularly, their two brilliant renditions of songs at the Stars of Wonder Concert in December.

Finally, we come to our new addition, Catherine Hoare, our new Administrator, who started work in February and has made such an enormous difference to our whole operation. How smoothly so many things now happen, compared to before is a wonder to see. But we must allow Catherine to introduce herself.





Pete and Andy



Night Walk



Harbour Connections



Lockdown Zoom



One to One Work



Social Distancing Meeting



## CATHERINE HOARE – ADMINISTRATOR

My background is that I was brought up on a livestock and dairy farm in Lancashire, gained a Pharmacology BSc Hons degree at Liverpool University, worked in Human Resources and Training with Lucas Industries in Birmingham before training and qualifying as a primary school teacher in Derbyshire. My husband Ian and I moved to the island in 2006 with our two children, who are both now grown up, finished their university educations and married. Our daughter lives and teaches on the island and has just had an adorable baby girl; our first grandchild, born in June this year. I continue some volunteering with IW School Pastors and enjoy baking and outdoor activities; walking dogs, gardening and dinghy sailing at Shalfleet.



From my involvement as a volunteer at the SWAY ROOT's youth group in Niton and as a member of Niton Methodist Church, I already knew about some of the work of SWAY. I received a very warm welcome onto the SWAY team in February. Over the last few months I have seen how SWAY has such a positive impact on lives in the South Wight

community. I am looking forward to getting to know more of our young people, families and supporters in the coming months.

## ANDY DORNING – INTERVIEW

### 1 How has youth work changed for you in the last 6 years?

*Firstly, we live in an ever-changing world and none more so than in the last 6 months, let alone the last 6 years. Every year we have a new cohort of young people come through the project. There's always a new trend – Pokémon, Minecraft, Instagram and not forgetting Tik Tok. One thing that has changed for me since I started out in youth work is how important it now is to have a whole family approach. SWAY has developed into more than just a Youth Project. With the closure of a number of youth activities, especially in these rural areas, I have come to see the value of the support of the local churches even more than before and this is firmly rooted in all the work SWAY is involved in.*

### 2 What is your dream for SWAY for these next 6 years?

*My dream is to see all the young people involved with SWAY fulfil their potential in their local community and lives. I'm privileged to lead SWAY in being able to play a small part in this. As a charity we have developed over the 6 years and my dream is to see a Community Hub opened up in the local area to support the young people and the wider community, to bring resources to the rural community to benefit and see young people and families flourish. I believe the local churches play a big role in this as they hold a heart for, and act as a strong foundation, for their local community.*



### 3 Describe two high points and two low points of the last year. (As if Andy could ever keep to two points!)

*Firstly, I must say how immensely proud I am of my young leaders in volunteering. They have been helping with the younger age groups throughout the year. When asked they stepped up and volunteered at the Brighstone Christmas Tree Festival in December when they completed over 156 hours of volunteering in just one weekend.*

*Secondly, it has been a privilege to get alongside a small group of lads before the global pandemic on a Sunday evening, to share life together; it was a real highlight to see them every Sunday evening at our house. For me personally, I enjoy seeing young people gain in confidence and each year we see them grow up, spread their wings and leave the project. Seeing their development and knowing that we played a small part in that, always brings a warm feeling to my soul.*

*Can I mention a third highpoint? I am also proud of how the charity has handled moving to a virtual world and keeping the youth groups running on zoom over the last 4 months. Young people have also been able to raise money for the Foodbank and SWAY by taking part in a virtual mountain walk climbing Scafell Pike from home. I'm immensely proud of the young people that took part and for all those who supported the young people on this adventure and raised funds. The summer has enabled us to put a programme together of summer activities outdoors and it was great to see the young people take part in our Geocaching competition and more recently be able to meet in small groups to do activities like kayaking and night walks.*

*The low points came in March when the decision was taken for the country to go into a lockdown due to coronavirus and this meant the closure of all weekly face-to-face youth groups. Difficult decisions were made to send our two gap years, Michael and Luke, home. We had to cancel the young leaders' weekend away and our summer residential to the Lake District.*

*However, I have been encouraged by how well a number of young people have handled the changes and I look forward with optimism to the challenges ahead as SWAY continues to support young people and their families.*

## JENNIE BURKE – FAMILIES' WORKER

### Reflections on the year

Having been appointed Youth and Families' Worker for SWAY in June 2017, this report covering twelve months ending in August 2020 takes stock of how the Families' Worker role has developed over the twenty-seven months since inception.

SWAY's whole family approach has ensured successful interventions and sustainable outcomes for many families. Our referrals continue to come mainly from the lead project worker, Andy Dorning, identifying a need within a family. A number of families this year have successfully had cases closed with Social Care through joint partnership with social workers and ourselves. A couple of families have been able to ensure their young person regularly attended school through our intervention. We have continued to be fortunate in having the expertise of Myrena Mercken (family therapist), who provides specialist help for our families when needed.

Our support for families continues to be one of befriending, listening, sign posting and advocacy. This has been particularly true throughout the Covid 19 pandemic which has had an enormous impact on our families. As a families' worker I was initially able to keep in contact by weekly phone calls and with some 'zoom' sessions, although not all families have access to the internet and others are not comfortable with using this technology. I was also able to help some families during lockdown by sourcing community groups who could provide food and medication to those in need.

However, this was unsustainable when I was furloughed for one month, though Andy kept in contact with families. It was very encouraging on returning to work to hear that many families were pleased to regain the support that SWAY offers.

## **The Food Project**

We are now beginning to explore new ways of supporting families in our ever-changing world. We are looking at developing an on-line cooking programme and a parenting course. This is on top of our usual interventions and support. I have realised through talking to the families that the lack of being able to physically meet, because of the restrictions, has led to many people feeling isolated and overlooked. As Nick Timothy said recently in the Daily Telegraph 'We need to reshape our economy and society to do more for families, and we need to do more to help the parents who struggle most.'

27th July 2020

The current proposal of SWAY building a bespoke Community Hub in South Wight would enable us to continue and expand these activities and to recruit and train volunteers from our community. This

should address the remoteness many families feel in our area.

## **Youth & Families' Worker Stats for the Year**

Key performance indicators for the year ending 2020 at a glance:

- **11 families being supported (2019, 13)**
- **20 hours per week (funded) (2019, 14)**
- **3 Young people referred to CAMHS (2019, 2)**
- **2 Families with Family Therapist (working voluntarily for SWAY) (2019, 4)**
- **2 Families with SENDIASS (2019, 2)**
- **2 Families referred to Frontline debit agency (2019, 3)**
- **4 Families case closed to Social Care (2019, 0)**
- **6 FW Personal consultation sessions with systemic Family Therapist (2019, 4)**

I am grateful for the support I have received from staff and trustee colleagues over the last year. I have been encouraged that families have been empowered to move forward, become more resilient, having addressed identified issues and confided in SWAY to draw alongside in support.

## **COMMUNITY HUB – RICHARD WEBB**

SWAY has had, as one of its long term goals, the aim of running a social enterprise which would help those who are not able to cope with the rigours of

full-time employment, whilst generating revenue that would help support the work of the Charity.

We have been researching possibilities for the social enterprise for the last three years. More recently our attention has been drawn to the possibility of establishing a Community Hub, which would include a café, shop and post office. The original stimulus for this enterprise arose from an approach from Chale Parish Council who were concerned for the future of the Village Stores and Café.

During the last twelve months we have explored different options and at the time of writing are in detailed discussions with two organisations with the hope that in the Autumn we will have a concrete proposal to put to the Community and to apply for planning permission. If everything comes together we could see a formal launch of the project in October 2020. The launch will trigger a major fund raising effort, so watch this space!

This project has the potential to make a big positive impact on the lives of our youngsters and families, and we are expecting that it will show show that 'God can do more than we can ask or imagine'.

## FINANCE REVIEW – ANDREW GARDNER

SWAY has clearly been very active in the past year and continues to be so, despite the interruptions caused by the coronavirus lockdown, albeit in various adapted ways. Inevitably, there is a cost to keeping the activities going, and almost 85 per cent of all the charity's costs are directly due to employing the three key staff members, without whom nothing would be able to happen at all.

This is an unusually large proportion of the income for SWAY, leaving little for the costs of running events, groups and ongoing costs of the Charity. This is a concern and indicates that our income needs to increase in the coming year if we are to grow and remain responsive to needs presented to us.

The financial year will close at the end of this month, but we can reasonably predict that the total costs for the year will be approximately £56,000. This has been funded by various gifts and grants from individuals, churches and grant-making bodies, and also from fundraising events; in fact, the total of income from these sources is expected to be around £60,000, which exceeds the costs by £4,000, enabling us to build reserves that provide security for the future. We are enormously grateful to every single giver who has contributed to SWAY's funds, however large or small the gift or grant.

## LOOKING FORWARD – PETER JOHNSON

In rounding up this Review, what can I say? The story of this year has been one of change and adaptation, challenge and growth. It has not been the easiest of years for charities all over the UK. During the lockdown we had to cancel a number of fundraising events that reduced our overall income for the year. Our support has nevertheless held strong and we are in a good position in many ways. However, as can be seen, there are challenges ahead.

The possibility of the Community Hub is massive for us as a Charity, one that holds so much potential for us and for the community around the South Wight, not least for Chale Green, with its total absence of community space now that the Stores has remained closed. This is going to



require imagination, support and energy. We are pursuing this avenue as you read.

Then there was the challenge of employing a Part-Time Youth Worker. Ever since losing Andy Evans in August 2019, we have known he would leave a gap that would be difficult to fill and we are pleased to announce that we are in a position to fill it with Jack Norridge. This is an exciting step for us, but a further strain on our budget.

The work and opportunities are there both for the Community Hub and the Part-Time Youth Worker. To take this forward is going to require hard work, imagination and prayer. We have appreciated your support of SWAY over the years and are deeply thankful for all you have given or prayed. We do not take for granted any of that support.

As we emerge into a new world we ask that you help us to take these next steps in our journey of providing hope and focus for the communities of South Wight. We would ask, in closing this Review, for your prayers and your support to realise these dreams and these plans.

## Thank yous

We are fully aware of the support of many of you on an individual basis who have supported us and we are deeply thankful to each and every one of you. We could not do this without you.

But we wanted to close with particular thanks to those big funders who have supported us this year. The Methodist District and Circuit have continued to support SWAY in a major way, as have the Joseph Rank Foundation. We are grateful for Wight Aid who have supported our summer programme, for the Diocese of Portsmouth who have supported our spiritual development of young people through their Mission Opportunities Fund and for the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Community Fund for supporting our Youth and Families' Worker.

The Parish Councils of Niton and Whitwell, and Chale have supported us again. Chale Horticulture have supported us, which was much appreciated. Then finally the three Churches – Niton Methodist, St Mary's, Brighstone and St Peter and St Paul's, Mottistone – have remained always supportive. To all these bodies and groups we remain enormously grateful for your support.



To donate or enquire about sway, please email  
Catherine at: [swayoffice1@gmail.com](mailto:swayoffice1@gmail.com)