

Annual Review 2006-2007

Chairman's Report

Last year I began my report with the comment that, in summary, we are making steady progress. Perhaps it is a measure of the stability that WIAMH has achieved that I can think of no better way to sum up the last year than to repeat that. Steady Progress. However, I don't think I'll get away with just leaving it there.

Steady Progress in this case means that we have not brought any exciting new developments to completion, though there is reason to think that there might be some in the next few months. It does not mean that there have not been problems to be dealt with during the year, though it does mean that they have been resolved without becoming crises. It does mean that there is still a great deal more on the to-do list, but things are moving on.

Last year I stated four priority areas for WIAMH to work on, over and above the things we were already doing: our constitutional arrangements, project development in Barra and Uist, development of our management systems and finding funding to enable the above to proceed.

As it happens, we did not find much in the way of funding. In particular, we have not found new funding for a new managerial post for WIAMH as a whole. Nevertheless, we have been able to take things forward to some degree. The directors have a clearer idea of the possibilities for future constitutional developments; we have taken the first steps towards new projects in Uist and Barra. Perhaps inevitably, as the Catch 23 project has specific funding, and staff attached to it, it has been the most successful part of the year, along with the Arts activities organised out of Catch 23. As ever there remain things to be done.

One thing which has become clearly apparent to me in the course of the year is that we have had more difficulty than in previous years in attracting volunteers at all levels, from the committee to people willing to act as local contacts in different areas, to people to run Catch 23. This is not the whole story, and Del will tell you more about the detail. However, in very broad terms it is difficult to find volunteers, and this is a problem that affects more than just WIAMH. It is an issue we are going to have to pay careful attention to in future. Not only do those volunteers we have need to be cherished and supported, but we have to have a realistic approach to our voluntary effort. We need to be clear on what we have to do on a voluntary basis, and what we will need paid staff in order to achieve. We have to make clear to our partners and funding organisations how far we can get with our aims on the basis of funding for voluntary activity, and what we can only realistically achieve on the basis of funding for employment – which means both wages and premises for people to work in.

For the year ahead, our priority areas remain the same as last year – more steady progress to come!

Thanks

Thanks are due to all those who have been involved in WIAMH this year, either as committee members, volunteer or paid workers, or as advisors, and those bodies and individuals who have given us funding, and donations, and most all the members and service users, without whom we would not need to exist, and whose support has been and will remain vital.

Niall Shaw

Catch 23 Project Report

Del Gunn

I have now been in post for around 3 years now and I suppose it's a good time to have a good look and ask has there been enough done during this time?

My report contains a number of achievements of which I and everyone involved at Catch 23 have reason to be extremely proud and there are a few areas where I think we need to make improvements.

Centre Usage

2007 has seen a marked increase in the number of drop-ins, in comparison to 2005 and 2006. By year end I predict we will have seen in excess of 600 extra drop-ins which is a jump of just over 25 percent. Since I began here we have also seen a levelling off of the split between male and female attendance. This I feel is due to the fact is due to staff and volunteers being evenly spread between both genders. We are also seeing more under 25s attending the Centre than ever before.

Training, Volunteers and Employment

This is an area we have made huge strides. We continue to offer our staff and volunteers training where available and this in turn has proved really effective in enabling our volunteers to gain employment. This year I have lost count of how many references I have had to write and it is great to see how the support in recovery given by everybody at Catch 23 can enable people to get the confidence necessary to think about getting back to work again. As mentioned at last years AGM, I felt there was a need for the staff and volunteers to gain more formal qualifications in Mental Health and we now

have two of us attending college. Although we have lost some volunteers we have also recruited some excellent new people in their place and their efforts this year have ensured that the centre has continued to offer the consistency of support that people have come to expect from us.

The Garden

After combating the major challenge that was the garden at number 23, this part of the Centre never fails to attract positive comment when people visit us now. The work put in here has created an extra space for the membership and Ian should get special mention due to the work he has done over the last two years. I remember when I first came here, how overgrown the garden was and that you had to be issued with a compass and a distress flare if you wanted to venture beyond the shed! Next year the plan is to source funding to purchase extra furniture for the garden.

Information and Support

This is an area that I have never really focused too much on, but Catch23 continues to be an excellent source of information for people who use the service and in turn we are able to offer service user views to organisations requiring information and feedback. We are able to signpost people to a range of services through the directories we have to hand, we have helped people access funding for further education and on a number of occasions made phone calls on behalf of people who are in genuine distress and feel unable to make necessary contact. We also make a point of making a phone call to some

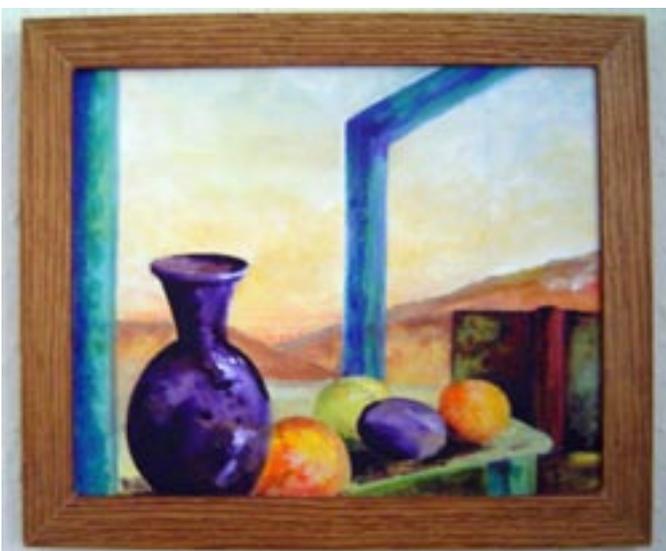
members who we know are struggling or we haven't seen for a while, just to check if they are okay.

Computer Access

When we received funding from Choose Life to purchase 2 computers, we could not predict how popular the free access to the internet would be. We now have 4 computers available and on most days they are all in operation. The membership use them for study, letter writing, contacting relatives and friends, sourcing information, buying online, games and even DVD rental.

Arts Activities

The artists and writers are now producing large volumes of material and we ask people to donate old picture frames so we can recycle them and get people's work displayed on the walls. Cathy has also secured wall space for a week at the library for the artists to display their work early in the New Year. The Writer's Group is now in full swing again and is growing rapidly having welcomed some new members into their fold. There was a lot of interest in photography this year at our Valtos Event and we will be starting sessions in digital photography/ art throughout 2008.



Funding

As I said last year I hoped that the Centre would be opened for longer periods by mid 2007. Regretfully I have not quite met these aims but by January it is hoped that we have received word of funding from two separate applications to pay for part time support worker posts that should see us increasing the Centre provision. A big chunk of the funding for next year's art event is already in place and I am in the process of sourcing the shortfall.

Tigh Cheilidh

Progress has been slow here. I would have hoped we had finished the refurbishment by now but a few things have conspired against us. Firstly some volunteers who had agreed to assist with the project gained employment or have left the Island for pastures new and secondly work to repair the roof and water ingress was somewhat delayed. Given the budget limitations and time constraints on staff/volunteers we had to delay the project giving precedence to work in the garden. I am happy to announce that progress is now on going again and look forward to completion in early 2008.

Summary and Thanks

At this point I would like to personally thank our partners and sponsors who have been fully supportive in my role as Centre Manager. Special mention should go to the Western Isles Health Board, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Choose Life, Art Angel, Manor Dairies, Western Isles Mental Health Partnership and Penumbra.

I think it is also appropriate that I mention that WIAMH is now assisting other small local charities with the production of tickets, posters and promotional literature.

Projects and Activities

Despite the limitations of our kitchen I can confidently say that Catch 23 has provided around 2500 bowls of soup, hundreds of baked potatoes, 9000-plus teas/coffees in the last year.

We continue to attract and retain a quality team of volunteers who work hand in hand with the staff creating an excellent atmosphere for those who need us in time of crisis and without them Catch 23 would cease to exist. We offer so much more than a drop-in facility and it is hard to quantify our true worth to the Community. But we have begun to make a real difference

I would like to end my report with a couple of quotes:

An Edinburgh psychiatrist who visited Catch 23 when in Lewis said *"Catch 23 has become a 'therapeutic community'. You can enter it when you want to, you can leave it when want to, but you always know it is there to welcome you when you need it most"*.

And taken from the HUG summer newsletter regarding the importance of the numerous drop-ins scattered around the Highlands and Islands of Scotland: *"They help us look forward and when we said 'a lifeline' a few paragraphs ago we meant literally that – they save lives – there can't really be a higher recommendation than that."*

i-reach

The fund continues to support WIAMH and other organisations and individuals in addressing issues relating to geographical and social isolation. It is now managed by a joint committee formed of Representatives from the statutory agencies and WIAMH.

(n.b. The i-reach fund is administered by us but does not form part of WIAMH funds, and so does not appear in our accounts, except where we receive grants from it for our own work.)

Partnership Working

As usual, WIAMH members and staff are working with other agencies in the *Western Isles Mental Health Partnership*, have served on the boards of the *Western Isles Advocacy Service* and *Western Isles Community Care Forum*. We also have our ongoing relationship with Penumbra, and are looking at possibilities for undertaking some shared outreach work. Other joint working is undertaken on a more informal basis.

Inpatient Forum

A significant new venture which is getting under way is the proposed Inpatients Forum. WIAMH have been represented in discussions about this development which is aimed at giving a formal voice in service planning and management to the users of the service. It is intended to be able to scrutinise and report on the inpatients' experience of all mental health services in hospitals, including the WI Hospital, time spent in other Island hospitals (usually this is awaiting transfer) and people's experience of mainland hospitals. Without wanting to get too optimistic, I believe that this development will enable people to have their voice heard in a more immediate and effective way than has been possible previously. Anyone who wants more information on this development can get in touch with us at the WIAMH office. The Forum will be starting work in the new year, and it is hoped that it will be fully up and running by Summer 2008.

Arts

Once again this year, arts activities form a significant component of the activities undertaken by WIAMH members. Most of these activities take place in Catch23.

Activities undertaken during the course of this year include writing, painting and drawing, and occasional sculptures. Two highlights of the year were the residential week at Valtos and Scaliscro, and a writers' retreat which two of the writing group attended, held at the Arvon Foundation's Moniack Mhor centre near Inverness.

Valtos 2007

This year marks a significant departure from previous years at Valtos, simply because the Valtos Centre is being redeveloped and was unavailable for residential use. Making up for this, Scaliscro Lodge was used for accommodation – providing significantly more in the way of physical comfort and amenities, which proved extremely popular.

As against this, the departure on a daily basis from the arts activity venue is thought to have been the cause in a slight drop in the actual amount of material produced. This is not likely to be an issue next year, as Valtos is going to be unavailable for the foreseeable future. It has been decided to base next year's event entirely at Scaliscro (though trips around Uig and Lewis will be unaffected).

One of the side benefits of holding an event in Uig is easy access to some of the outdoor pursuits that people don't always get enough of, including climbing, hillwalking and water sports. It has been suggested that an entire extra programme of outdoor activities should be undertaken in future years, though this will depend on resources.



pictures taken in Uig during the Arts event this year

Finances 2006-2007

Our accounts for 2006-07 have been prepared and verified by Nicolsons Accountants. The full set of accounts and formal report of the directors is available for study at the WIAMH office, or a copy is available on request.

As predicted in last year's report, we have seen another increase in overall income this year, following on the significant increase in 04-05. Our expenditure has of course risen to match this – this year we spent more than we got in, though at £1,507 not as much more as was anticipated at the last AGM. All of this represents a significant increase in the amount of work we have been doing. Notably, our staff costs increased by around 70% over the year, which means we are paying more people to do more things.

Most of our income is grants from NHS Western Isles and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, including our core funding. We received project grants from Choose Life and the i-reach fund. We also managed to generate around £300 of printing income in this year – this figure should increase in future.

The figure for materials is significantly higher this year than last. This is due to the points in time at which bills became due rather than representing a change in activities.

In future we hope to see further increases in income, especially for staff, in order to carry out more activities. This is virtually guaranteed for the year ahead, as we already have had some. However, given the amount of work we could usefully be doing, we could see some significant further developments without feeling too pleased with ourselves.

Summary of Income and Expenditure 1 April 2006 to 31 March 2007

	2006-07	2005-06
Income	£	£
Grants	36,331	32,767
Earned Income	306	-
Donations & Subscriptions	264	467
Bank Interest	384	530
Reimbursements	115	-
Total	37,400	33,764
Expenditure	£	£
Staff costs	22,408	16,294
Travel & Volunteer Expenses	4,719	5,181
Materials	3,166	705
Premises	1,743	3,000
Training	1,647	2,511
Communications	958	1,505
Equipment	890	1,511
Postage and Stationery	852	688
Insurance	616	456
Venue Hire etc.	468	-
Accountancy	350	605
Other	1,090	846
Total	38,907	33,302
Excess of Income over Expenditure	-1,507	462

Note: This is an income and expenditure summary. The figures above do not include depreciation and assets. Once these are taken into account, the assets value of WIAMH at the beginning and end of the year was as follows:

Current Assets at 31-03-06:	£ 21,344
Current Assets at 31-03-07:	£ 19,632

Western Isles Association for Mental Health

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