

# ANNUAL REPORT 2017

**WM Funders  
Network**



[www.wmfn.org.uk](http://www.wmfn.org.uk)

@westmidfunders

# ORGANISATIONAL REPORT



2017 has been an active and productive year, with a stimulating programme of events. This year we changed our legal status to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and our name to WM Funders Network. This reflects the growth and diversity in the Network's membership over the last few years. The landscape of funding for third sector organisations continues to change as public sector cuts impact on grants to charities and the voluntary and community sector; commissioning and contracts increase and a growing interest in social investment. Our programme of events and activities reflects some of these changes and the interests of our members and the wider funding sector, with a significant interest in collaboration between funders and funders and grantees, the role of data in improving decision making for funders and for grantees, and blended finance in supporting the development and future of the sector.

Our keynote speaker at the 2017 AGM was Lord Rooker, Chair of the House of Lords Charity Select Committee, who presented the findings and recommendations of the report: Stronger Charities for a Strong Society, which prompted a lively debate on the new challenges that face charities, in particular the impact on smaller charities. Our programme of events and activities consists of roundtable discussions, briefings, seminars and conferences. This year's briefing was on the mental wellbeing of children and young people, reflecting the growing concern in the increasing demand for support and the lack of resources and timely interventions to reduce the risk of children and young people spiralling into more complex mental health issues. Our Annual Conference held at Innovation Birmingham (@innobham), reflected the interest in collaboration and its impact on the third sector. Speakers from New Philanthropy Capital (@NPCThinks) and 360 Giving (@360Giving), with input from the Institute for Voluntary Action Research (@IVAR\_UK), gave food for thought on how collaboration across funders and with grantees can help to address complex social problems in a climate of reduced funding and public sector cuts.

A strategy review held by Trustees in the Autumn reflected on the work and impact of the Network over the last 3 years and its future direction. We will continue to strive to put forward an exciting programme of events and activities that will focus on the themes of collaborative approaches, blended finance for the third sector and open and shared data to better inform decision making, which we believe will enable our members and the wider third sector to improve the quality of life for those most disadvantaged and vulnerable in society.

## **Pauline Roche, Chair**



WMFN has seen a strong financial performance in 2017. Overall income has exceeded the budget and both membership subscriptions and grant donations has risen compared to 2015 and 2016 figures. This is particularly pleasing as these were both high priorities and reflect the hard work undertaken by both the Chair Person and Secretary, supported by the Board. Income from membership subscriptions in particular has exceeded budget expectations by over 25% and the charity has attracted a number of new members.

Expenditure has been in line with budget expectations; the only notable variations in marketing and communication consultancy costs (17% over budget) and underspend on website development (£417). Venue and catering costs for events remain well managed and controlled. Over £12,000 of restricted and non-restricted are carried into 2018 to fund further developmental activities.

## **Steven Simpson, Treasurer**

## Trustees (at 31/12/17)

Pauline Roche – Managing Director, RnR Organisation (Individual Member) – Chair  
Peter Hughes – Regional Manager, Charity Bank - Vice Chair  
Steven Simpson – Chief Executive, Harborne Parish Lands Charity – Treasurer  
Steve Baylis – Head of Development, Archdiocese of Birmingham  
Melinda Connelly – Regional Manager, Central Region, BBC Children in Need  
David Owen OBE – Chair, Owen Family Charity Trust  
Debbie Pippard – Head of Programmes, Barrow Cadbury Trust  
Kath Rees – Advisor, Hay Trust (Resigned March 2017)  
Laura Rollason – Marketing Officer, Big Lottery (Joined September 2017)  
Popinder Kaur – Chief Executive, The Haven (Joined September 2017)

The Board met four times during the year and the meetings were generously hosted by Tyndallwood Solicitors and Harborne Parish Lands Charity.

### Ambassadors.

Judy Dyke and Robert King were our Ambassadors in 2017. They help us raise the profile of WM Funders Network and gain new members and supporters. Read more about them on our website.



JUDY DYKE



ROBERT KING

## Events Calendar 2017

Wednesday 25th January Roundtable Discussion: Grant Management and Monitoring Systems, Laura Cowley, Wolves Aid, Steven Simpson HPLC, Alan Martin, Yardley Great Trust at Harborne Parish Lands Charity (Attendance 12)

Thursday 6th April AGM and Talk: Lord Rooker – Member, Charity Select Committee – Stronger Charities for a Stronger Society Report at BBC Children in Need (@BBCCiN) (Attendance 30)

Wednesday 26th April Roundtable Discussion: Assessing Grant Applications: what is good practice? Tina Costello, HoE CF and Richard Dickson, Westhill Endowment, at Harborne Parish Lands Charity (Attendance 10)

Friday 9th June Joint Seminar: Updates on charity law, Shivaji Shiva, Anthony Collins, charity finance, Fleur Holden, Sayer Vincent and investment management, Ian Burrows, Brewin Dolphin, at Anthony Collins Solicitors (Attendance 24)

Tuesday 19th July Roundtable Discussion: Assessing the impact of your grant: What to consider? Melinda Connelly, BBC Children in Need, Steven Simpson, HPLC, at Harborne Parish Lands Charity (Attendance 9)

Tuesday 5th September Briefing: Mental Wellbeing of Children and Young People: Speakers – Diane Gault, Young Minds, Karen Newbigging, University of Birmingham, Clare Dale, Kaleidoscope Group, at Kaleidoscope Group (Attendance 25)

Wednesday 20th September Roundtable Discussion: Promoting Collaboration rather than competition: ways forward for funders – Mark Rutherford, Barrow Cadbury Trust, Stuart Morton, South B'ham Friends Institute Trust, Stephna Watts, Big Lottery, at Tyndallwoods (Attendance 12)

Tuesday 3rd October Seminar and advice clinic: Negotiating and Managing Leases, with Ethical Property Foundation at Anthony Collins Solicitors(@ACSLLP) (Attendance 20)

Tuesday 9th November Autumn Conference: Collaboration and its Impact: Panel of Speakers – New Philanthropy Capital, 360 Giving, Institute of Voluntary Action Research (contributor), at Innovation Birmingham (Attendance 34)

## Key Developments & Activities



**Legal Status:** The process to change the legal status to CIO and the name to WM Funders Network was completed in Autumn 2017. Members were notified of the transfer of membership to WM Funders Network in 2017.



**Outreach:** We continued to take forward our development plan and have become involved in the Birmingham Investment in Neighbourhoods and Communities hub - a model of greater collaboration and co-operation with other types of funders interested in investing in local disadvantaged communities. We continue to build relations with other national and local funding networks and voluntary sector infrastructure support organisations as well as public sector bodies. Several new members, including social investors, have joined our network during the year reflecting the growing diversity of funding sources operating in the region.



**Communications:** We sent 20 events e-bulletins and updates, 6 news updates and we updated the website on a regular basis. Our Twitter account (@westmidfunders) has 706 followers (including members on Twitter) and we have now tweeted 1,577 times. Our new Facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/WMFundersNetwork/> has 25 followers. We continue to use dedicated hashtags for our events to spread news about our work and connect with others doing similar work and use this route to circulate information and promote members' work.



**Events:** We ran 9 events throughout the year, thanks to Trustees, sponsors, speakers and facilitators. Attendance ranged from a minimum of nine at one of the roundtable discussions to thirty-four at the Annual Conference. We welcome ideas for events, activities and discussion topics, as well as help with organising and funding the events programme, so if you have a contribution to make, we'd love to hear from you.

## SPECIAL THANKS

### **The Trustees would like to take this opportunity to thank:**

Barrow Cadbury Trust, South Birmingham Friends Institute Trust, Owen Family Trust and Eveson Charitable Trust for their additional grant support, which has enabled us to further develop our work and services to members.

Tyndallwoods Solicitors, Harborne Parish Lands Charity, Anthony Collins Solicitors and Brewin Dolphin Charity Investment, BBC Children in Need for hosting events. Members continued contribution and involvement in the Network; our Secretary Dipali Chandra for her valuable services.

### **Contact Us**

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### **Keep in Touch!**

Follow us on Twitter @westmidfunders

Visit our website [www.wmfn.org.uk](http://www.wmfn.org.uk)

Send us your news and information to share: [dipali.chandra@wmfn.org.uk](mailto:dipali.chandra@wmfn.org.uk)

Find out more about membership [www.wmfn.org.uk/membership](http://www.wmfn.org.uk/membership)

**And don't forget to let your contacts know you are a member of WMFN  
– use our logo, link to our website, share our news.**

**WM Funders Network** is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. It is the leading membership association for charitable trusts, social investors and public bodies in the West Midlands. We help members to work more effectively and efficiently, share and learn from each other's experience of funding, and explore matters of common social concern that informs our funding decisions. We have 68 members ranging from large national foundations and social investors to smaller family trusts that give grants and social finance in the region to the voluntary and community sector and social enterprises, and individuals. The organisation also aims to provide a route for funders to be able to engage formally with private and public funders and their networks to increase opportunities for co-ordination and collaboration to better meet the needs of the diverse communities in the region, through their support of the third sector.

Charity Registration No: 1173579