Chair of Trustees Report

This year we can report on some significant developments, some good and some not so good. As you will see in Mac’s report, the uncertainty around the main contracts was resolved through collaboration with the County Council. This meant that our situation was clearer and we could move forward with a structured service. However, the reduced budget had consequences for staffing and we had to lose some valuable people.

Gill Wyatt announced during the year that she would be retiring. She had led the organisation since its formation as the Carer’s Support Project in 1996. Indeed, I was interviewed twice by her for Outreach Worker posts - when starting in 1996, covering Cannock Chase and returning in 1999 to cover Tamworth!

I think it is fair to say that without her, CASS would not be the significant organisation it is today. She has dedicated the last 15 years to ensuring CASS was not only delivering the services that you, the carers, wanted but also to making sure the organisation was positioned well strategically, with a wide range of partners and a good track record. I am confident this contributed to the County Council’s decision to extend CASS’s contract further than merely to the end of the financial year.

On behalf of all the trustees, I wish to thank the whole staff team for their enthusiasm, dedication and caring approach. They are also always ready to contribute to the future direction of the organisation, with constructive thoughts and ideas.

I am again indebted to the trustees and their dedication and hard work behind the scenes. Without them, the task of maintaining CASS at the forefront of developments would be much harder, if not impossible. I would like to thank them all for their involvement and effort.

We have sadly had to lose one or two trustees to moves or pressure of other commitments, but fortunately we have gained others. I would like to say particular thanks to Peter Gloyne, who retired as Treasurer after many years support to the Board. Someone who can make complex accounts relatively easy to understand deserves a mention in my books!

Chief Officer’s Report

I find it difficult to reflect back in specified time frames. We have to remember to confine ourselves to what happened between April 2011 and March end 2012. I find it hard to recall what happened last week – life can be so busy.

It was another year of change for CASS. In the end our services did not go out to tender and we worked in partnership with the Joint Commissioning Unit to design a new approach, with a reduced budget to deliver services to carers.

This caused some stress to carers and staff, as cut backs had to be made. This resulted in a reduction in hours for some posts and sadly, redundancy for others.

Some activities had to be withdrawn. Despite this, in June 2011 we sailed through our Investors In People award and have been accredited for another 3 years.

The staff buckled down and worked at some new and innovative ways to try to reach more carers and support them more effectively.

We launched our Advice Line to have dedicated, well trained staff on hand to answer carers’ calls and extended our opening hours.

We restructured the drop ins (Carers Association Locality Links) bringing in Locality workers to assist the new Health and Wellbeing team to deliver support to carers. We looked at our monitoring systems to see how best to record carers concerns and develop our approach to meet these needs.

Many people don’t like change but this opportunity gave us a chance to stop and look at how we could do things differently, but still raise our standards and make a positive difference for Carers.

The main contract was awarded in October 2011 to run until End of Sept 2013.

We successfully supported 1082 new adult carers and 124 new young carers and continued to develop our service for young Adult Carers 18 -25.

The Contracts for Alzheimer’s cafés, Mental Health support workers and Post Diagnosis support were eventually rolled over again for another year until March 2013.

At the end of March 2012, Gill Wyatt the original pioneer of CASS decided to step down as Chief Officer to undertake a pilot study for the organisation in partnership with Staffs CC. Her leadership and commitment will be greatly missed. I would like to thank her for all she has achieved in her 16 years as CO and for being my friend and mentor.

Gill’s departure led to a restructure of the organisation with changes in staff and changes in roles and responsibilities. Throughout this period I am pleased to say the staff pulled together supporting one another whilst recruitment to various posts was undertaken. We learned a lot about each other during this time and how vital everyone’s contribution is to the running of our services.

We ended the year looking forward to a bright future despite the recession, armed with as much dedication and enthusiasm as ever to continue to improve life for carers. I am delighted to be the new CO and never imagined when I started in 1996 this is where I would be in 2012.

My thanks go to everyone involved with CASS for all they have achieved for Carers.
Adult Locality Team

What a year it has been! We started off the year as the Outreach Team. Then in October, in line with the start of our new contract, we changed into the Adult Locality Team. However, we have not just changed our title; this has been accompanied by some really exciting changes in the way we provide our service.

Providing one to one support is at the heart of our service and we are now able to continue to provide this service in individual homes, but we are also encouraging our carers to visit us at various locations throughout our area. By carefully selecting our venues, we are able to provide one to one support at our CALL meetings, or at the Alzheimer’s Café or even working in partnership with organisations in their own support groups. This means that we are able to offer far more flexibility with our service. Support clinics have also been held in local supermarkets, which has helped forge stronger links with our local suppliers and local Community Venues. By being able to offer our services in a more concentrated way in community settings, we are able to respond quicker to clients who need more urgent support, and also keep our carbon footprint down! However, we will always recognise that some carers are unable to attend community settings and in these cases, home visits will always be provided.

The Adult Locality Team has worked very hard on increasing the support offered to carers within various GP surgeries within Southern Staffordshire and this is now resulting in significant progress, with monthly clinics being held in a number of localities. We have also forged closer links with our local suppliers and local Community Venues. By being able to offer our services in a more concentrated way in community settings, we are able to respond quicker to clients who need more urgent support, and also keep our carbon footprint down! However, we will always recognise that some carers are unable to attend community settings and in these cases, home visits will always be provided.

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We have continued to raise awareness of carers needs and have provided Carers Awareness Sessions to the Fire Service and also as part of the Lichfield District Strategic Partnership ‘Let’s Work Together’ programme, which has enabled us to deliver training to multi sector audience covering the whole of the Lichfield area and has resulted in a greater awareness of carers and a number of referrals.

Trends

The team report an increase in queries around benefits and Fairer Access to Care changes. Lots of carers have expressed their concern around the changes incorporated as part of Fairer Access to Care and the loss of financial support for day care. Reductions of services as part of these changes have resulted in increased caring responsibility for many of our carers. Concerns have also been expressed around care provision on discharge from hospital and support for carers upon discharge. However, the main service provided by the Adult Locality Team is still the provision of emotional support that allows the carer to offload their concerns about their caring role in a understanding, professional and confidential environment.

Alzheimer Cafés

Our six Alzheimer’s Cafés have been well attended throughout the year and we have welcomed more than 1,260 carers over the 12 month period.

At the café’s carers have the chance to talk to other carers whilst their cared for enjoy either an activity or a chat. Carers are able to access emotional support from other carers and from CASS staff. They can also access information that enables them to better understand dementia. Information about other services that encourage positive social interaction and maintain independence is also available.

Where appropriate we encourage former carers to become volunteers at the café’s, using their experiences to support others. We offer training and support to all of our volunteers. Volunteers have attended a number of training sessions this year equipping them with the skills and knowledge they need to make a meaningful contribution at the café’s

We arranged a number of speakers at the café’s thought out the year. These included:

- Homelinstead spoke about the care services they offer
- Age UK
- Former carers talked about their personal experience as a carer
- Dementia specific speakers included MAC UK, Dementia Advisors
- Approach talked about the challenges faced with caring for someone with dementia.

The following are some quote from attendees of the cafes over the last 12 months:

“Well attended café, very useful information, very informative, look forward to next time”

“Good advice/information, friendly entertainment as ever, nice buffet. Wouldn’t know what to do without coming to the café”

“As always, a lovely time. Everyone is so helpful and friendly, a much looked forward to event. Many thanks”

“We usually go to the café, nice environment, nice food, activities. Would hate to lose it”

“Have found the information given this evening very helpful”

“A lovely time, food, companionship and activities (especially songs) thank you”

“Listening to Ruth from Homelinstead and her stories gave me food for thought when my wife wishes to make a choice about where to go”

“Listening to Ruth from Homelinstead and her stories gave me food for thought when my wife wishes to make a choice about where to go”

Activities were planned to enable the carer and their cared for to take part in a social activity together. The most popular involve music whether that is dancing, singing or musical bingo. Quizzes continue to be popular with both carers and the cared for. Our aim is for everyone to leave the café with a smile on their face.

We encourage carers to tell us what they think about the session at the end of each café. This enables us to improve the service we offer. Generally feedback for the period has been very positive. We are aware that carers prefer the information sessions to be short as the cared for may become restless which may mean the carer cannot focus on what is being said. We have taken on board these comments and now try to keep the sessions shorter and more focussed.

We have been lucky to receive a number of very generous donations during the year. These donations have allowed us to provide additional therapeutic activities such as memory boxes for families to share. The generosity shown towards the Alzheimer’s Café’s by the public demonstrates a positive attitude towards supporting vulnerable people within our society. People appreciate the importance of providing such a welcoming comfortable environment, often at a very traumatic time in their lives.
Post Diagnosis Support Service

CASS is delighted to be able to continue to provide a service to clients who have received a new diagnosis of a progressive neurological condition within the districts of East Staffs, Lichfield and Tamworth; with thanks to the PCT for their partnership.

The PDSS have experienced another very busy year providing specialist counselling, emotional support and targeted information to clients facing the initial stages of shock and adjustment that comes with receiving a new diagnosis of a progressive neurological condition i.e. Multiple Sclerosis, Motor Neurone Disease, Parkinson’s and Huntington’s Disease.

Through the year the service has supported 72 clients in total, with 52 clients being newly referred to the service and 12 clients being referred back to the service for further support following a relapse in their condition.

The majority of clients have taken advantage of the specialist counselling provision which is delivered on a flexible and needs-led basis. Under the new contract the service is required to focus solely on the individual with the progressive neurological condition, as such carers who are identified through the PDSS have been immediately referred to a CASS Locality Worker for specialist carers support where appropriate. The new contract requires the PDSS to provide a maximum of 6 sessions of specialist counselling, which has proved to be very successful. Clients have engaged well with the specialist counselling process and have worked very hard in facing their issues, adjusting and working towards a different way of living their lives in light of their new diagnosis.

The specialist counselling is delivered in a variety of confidential settings enabling clients to explore thoughts and feelings in greater depth and to address anxieties and issues that may be adding to their stress. Offering a time limited intervention has allowed for clients to be seen sooner as there has been a reduction in waiting times from 6 weeks to between 2-4 weeks.

Referrals to the PDSS have been mainly received from GP practices, specialist nurses, occupational therapists, rehabilitation teams, adult ability team or by self-referral.

Feedback received from clients who have engaged with this service shows clearly the need for and the positive impact the PDSS has for those facing the difficulty of coming to terms with such a life changing diagnosis.

Health & Wellbeing Service

Under our new banner as the CASS Health & Wellbeing Service with two workers remaining, our key directive became delivery of the regular Carers Association Locality Links (CALL) group meetings (formerly Drop-ins), plus a range of Health & Wellbeing focused sessions such as our well known “Take Good Care of Yourself” programmes. Additionally we continued to pilot the Transitional/Young Adult Carers sessions, with the help of external funding sources and there is evidence of some rewarding and positive outcomes from this branch of work, for which a separate report is available.

Successful funding bids received from Adult & Community Learning Services and Staffordshire Arts Grants enabled us to run Emotional Wellbeing courses for both adult and young adult carers and also music, dance, art and personal development sessions for the latter.

CALL sessions still retain valuable social and informal learning elements and outcomes, with a greater informational focus. They also offer carers access to one to one appointments with a CASS Locality Worker, should they require more in depth advice and support. Talks and visits from other organisations are a regular feature and we frequently include relaxation or informal learning tasters for carers – they tell us these help to break the ice and take their minds off caring worries. Trained staff or Volunteers have offered 6 sessions of specialist complementary therapies from time to time and there have been therapies or activities provided through occasional donations and funding.

H & W courses on Simple Massage for Hands, Face & Shoulders were available in the year so carers could use these basic skills at home on themselves and family. Some carers have gone a step further and went on to take other courses independently to qualify as complementary therapists – a fantastic achievement.

Whilst we no longer had the capacity to continue with our Health Walk & Talks, Male Carers’ or Reiki meetings, most carers who supported these were able to access alternatives, through Stafford Borough Council Walks Scheme or other local groups. Several carers from the CASS Walk & Talk groups successfully went on to train as Volunteer Walk Leaders – filling essential roles supporting local walks.

Despite the changes, there was an overall increase of 8% in carer episodes from the previous year. The CALL groups attendance rose for most of the areas, with a 27% overall increase from last year (full breakdown in the H & W annual report). 83% of carers who replied to our training needs analyses and review reported that attending H & W sessions had a positive difference to their wellbeing. Full details and information on all our activity and outcomes is available in the latest CASS Health & Wellbeing Service Annual Report.
Volunteer Service

The Volunteer Service has once again continued to progress successfully through what has been a time of changes at CASS and we have to say we are extremely proud of all of our 90 plus active volunteers and their sterling work.

With the support of our reliable and dedicated volunteers our Alzheimer’s cafes and CALLS groups throughout southern Staffordshire have all continued to run effectively and smoothly. The telephone befrienders and the volunteers who befriend in the care homes (to give the carers a much needed break) are continuing to provide a much appreciated service supporting carers and their families at the times it is most needed.

Our telephone support service has developed to meet the current needs of carers by supporting them through a regular weekly or monthly phone call from a volunteer and this is also very popular service that carers value. Other volunteers have been busy supporting other areas of CASS, for example at the Carers’ Centre HQ, helping out with various admin tasks.

We have been able to send volunteers on training opportunities such as first aid and food hygiene courses and plan to continue offering further useful training options in the future, whenever budgets allow.

In February this year, Jim Sharpe, one of our volunteers, was nominated for the Princess Royal Trust for Carers Midland Region “Marsh Award”: Jim’s help and support at the Alzheimer’s cafes, the Men’s Group and as a Walk Leader had made a big difference and been very much appreciated. I am delighted to say Jim won the award, receiving a certificate and a well deserved cheque. We do, in fact, recognise and value each and every volunteer’s contribution, no-one goes unnoticed and we especially acknowledge and celebrate the work of our voluntary army of helpers every year during national Volunteer’s Week in June.

Several of our volunteers have nominated CASS as a priority. All the volunteers have been provided with a new updated Volunteer Handbook containing all of our latest policies and procedures so they are aware of these and can refer to them whenever needed.

All new volunteers receive an induction with Jane Hinton, the CASS Volunteer Coordinator, when the necessary paperwork and CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) check application is completed. Also part of the induction is to talk about their role and duties as a CASS volunteer and discuss the main procedures and policies in the handbook, such as the importance of confidentiality and the boundaries of the volunteer role.

Any questions or concerns that a volunteer may have regarding their role can be discussed at this stage or of course, if any arise at any time whilst volunteering. We continue to support volunteers throughout their time working with CASS and the support and companionship of other volunteers and the positive interaction with carers and their families and also other CASS team members are all, without a doubt, very important factors in ensuring that the volunteer’s role will be both a rewarding and enjoyable experience.

We are sure that the CASS Volunteer Services will continue going from strength to strength, with our excellent team of volunteers soundly supporting us in so many aspects of our work for carers.

We continue to support volunteers throughout the future, whenever budgets allow. We have been able to send volunteers on training opportunities such as first aid and food hygiene courses and plan to continue offering further useful training options in the future, whenever budgets allow.

Website News

The website is well used and many carers choose to contact us by email, especially those who are working or care for a long distance.

This response has proved invaluable to carers seeking information and emotional support at a time convenient for them.

Details of our events and photographs are shared to highlight opportunities to encourage carers to take up our services.

This is a fast moving media and we have plans to develop our website in the coming year.

Organisational Support

The admin staff within the CASS main office are responsible for welcoming visitors to the Centre, handling calls and for providing valuable day to day support for the rest of the CASS staff. Thanks to Lisa and Lynn. The team have had some extra help from Leanne Greene, a college student, who has worked part time alongside the permanent staff. Volunteers occasionally help when there is a large mail out and to cover for sickness and holidays. Thanks to Mel who has been volunteering with CASS for more than 10 years for his help and commitment.

Every year seems to get more and more busy and the team cope excellently with additional pressures. The setting up of the Advice Line has helped with diverting telephone calls in the right direction. The new telephone system has been beneficial in instigating and making the transition run smoothly, a bit of a learning curve for us all at the main office, but we have got to grips with it and now calls are handled quickly and efficiently.

The admin team is line managed by Sandra Hall, the Office and Finance Manager, who ensures that the bills are paid, the building remains standing and complies with all health and safety requirements and, vitally, ensures the staff are paid on time!
Young Carers Service

CASS Young Carers Service has enjoyed another exciting year supporting 392 active young carers and their families, and undertaking 892 meaningful one-to-one active interventions through a blended approach of home visits and visits undertaken within schools.

During this year the Young Carers Service has seen a dramatic increase in the level of complexity of cases referred, with many cases being referred at crisis point. The number of cases referred to the service as a direct result of the CAF (Common Assessment Framework) has again increased and CASS Young Carers Service is often the only non-universal service involved at point of referral. The service has continued to offer information, guidance and emotional support to young carers and their families, whilst undertaking appropriate and timely signposting and referral onto appropriate agencies.

The improved referral process within the Young Carers Service has now embedded fully and has proved to be a direct result of the CAF (Common Assessment Framework) and the service has continued to grow. The number of cases referred to the service has again increased and CASS Young Carers Service is now receiving a large number of referrals directly into the service, with many cases being referred at crisis point. The service has continued to offer information, guidance and emotional support to young carers and their families, whilst undertaking appropriate and timely signposting and referral onto appropriate agencies.

Young Carers Meeting Zones (clubs) were held, offering 928 placements across the 7 groups which cover the 6 districts served by CASS. Unfortunately due to funding reductions from the PCT, 4 of the 7 groups were required to cease due to no funding being available. A wide range of engaging and stimulating activities were delivered by the team during the CASS Young Carers Meeting Zones and Buddy-Up sessions. A total of 27 outings were delivered, ranging from summer picnics at Sandon Hall to Christmas Panto to Portmadog, a seaside trip to Portmadog (to name but a few) sandwiched in between!

CASS Young Carers Service has worked in partnership to deliver the Young Carers First Aid Programme ‘Empowering Hands’ which offers young carers the opportunity to explore new skills, enhance current skills and gain a recognised First Aid qualification. Young carers have expressed that these courses have supported an increase in confidence regarding their caring role and their abilities as carers.

During the school holidays Young Carers Cookery Days were delivered by CASS YCS staff, offering Young Carers the opportunity to explore hands-on cookery - cooking a roast lunch of pork and chicken with all the trimmings, a cheese cake and healthy snacks - all from scratch!

The team are currently building on the success of the CASS Young Carers Cookery Days and further developing this highly valuable training and engagement opportunity for young carers.

At the Annual Lions Spring Fling Event 130 young carers attended and enjoyed a fabulous evening of music, food and activities.

A huge thanks once again must be extended to all our supporters for all their very generous support of time, energy and commitment.

Mental Health Carer Workers

CASS has provided specialist services for carers who care for a relative or friend with a mental health difficulty. 126 new referrals were made to the service during the year. The service provided 751 sessions of one-to-one support to 220 registered carers, through home visits, telephone support and specialised group work. In addition to advice and information, carers have accessed vital emotional support which is integral to providing a personalised, responsive and effective service, resulting in positive outcomes for carers. Carers who are registered with the service will have received more generic support which includes newsletters and fact sheets, and have been encouraged to access other CASS services which include Carers Locality Drop-In’s and Carers Health & Well-Being events where carers can access both staff and peer support.

Group work and events have enabled CASS’ Mental Health Carer Workers to offer support to more carers than if they were solely undertaking home visits. Carers have voiced how the blended approach of this service offers the flexibility and timely intervention required to effectively support carers caring for someone with a mental health difficulty.

The service also provides a range of signposting and referral to a number of agencies whilst working in close partnership with statutory, private and third sector agencies. The service has been active in referring carers for a Carers Assessment, referring directly into mental health services, and sensitively supporting carers to access the Patient Advice Liaison Service.

The service has recently reviewed and improved the process for feeding carers views and concerns to relevant forums. Whilst working collaboratively with The Service User Network CASS has launched a Mental Health Carers Comments Log which has enabled the appropriate reporting of carers issues offering a robust and consistent approach. The work of the service has enabled carers feedback and increased carer involvement regarding service development within The Service User Reference Forum, Carer Engagement in Care Planning, Acute Care Forum, 4U meetings which have a direct link to The Mental Health Partnership Board, The Service User and Carers Sub Group.

The feedback received from carers clearly indicates that this service is a highly valued and much needed service, one that gives carers the opportunity to discuss their feelings and needs in a confidential, emotionally safe and non-judgemental environment.
Finance

Income

Income for the charity was £1,040,915, a reduction of £40,507 compared to the previous year. Of this, our mainstream contractual and discretionary income fell by £115,452 (13.3%) in the year. Carers breaks income increased to £283,256 as an increased number of awards were made.

A summary of the sources of income is shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOURCES OF INCOME</th>
<th>2011-12 (%)</th>
<th>2012-13 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contract</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Services</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Carers</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Young Workers</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mental Health</td>
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<td>Administration Costs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Investment Income</td>
<td>159.6%</td>
<td>168.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carers Breaks</td>
<td>293.3%</td>
<td>310.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Income</td>
<td>1,040.9%</td>
<td>1,082.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Expenditure

As a result of the reduction in contractual and discretionary income, the organisation’s operating expenditure was reduced in the year by £78,510.

The increase in carers breaks awards saw an additional £62,644 paid out to Carers.
Reserves

Despite the fall in income in the year, careful control of costs enabled a surplus of £27,498 to be recorded. At the end of the year, reserves stood at £383,559.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESERVES</th>
<th>2015-16</th>
<th>2016-17</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Restricted Funds</td>
<td>270.0</td>
<td>236.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unrestricted Funds - General</td>
<td>136.4</td>
<td>177.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unrestricted Funds - Designated</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Reserves</td>
<td>413.5</td>
<td>310.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Board of Trustees
2011/12:
Mr K Parson (Chair)
Mrs H Dart (V Chair)
Mr K Tranter (Treasurer)
Miss S Jackson
Mrs I Davies
Mr P Edgerton
Mrs G Morris
Mrs B White
Mrs L Gerhardt
Mr D Kidney
Mrs C Cammock

Senior Management Team:
Mac Cock - Chief Officer;
Deputy CO - Mandy Rollins;
Sandra Hall - Office & Finance Manager;
Cynthia Boden - Health & Wellbeing Manager

Carers Association Southern Staffordshire
The Carers Centre
Austin Friars, Stafford ST174AP
Tel: 01785 606675
www.carersinformation.org.uk

Our thanks go to:
The staff for their commitment and hard work.
All the volunteers who have given us their time and energy.
Those who have generously supported our work through donations and;
most of all, to our carers who provide so much support and encouragement to those they care for - it’s a privilege and a pleasure to be working with you.

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twitter.com/#!/CASSwe care