



– towards better journalism –

The PressWise Trust
Registered Charity No. 1076002
Limited Company No. 3747192

Advice, information, research and training on media ethics

ANNUAL REPORT

and

ACCOUNTS

2002 – 2003

Back from the brink...

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1. A FRUITFUL IF DIFFICULT YEAR

- 1.1 The financial difficulties that have dogged a decade of activities brought PressWise to the point of closure in the summer of 2002, and had it not been for the intervention of the **Esmee Fairbairn Foundation**, the Trust would have been reduced to a single project funded by the **Home Office Challenge Fund**, operating with part-time freelance staff. Nonetheless it proved to be a fruitful year. (see Other Activities, below)
- 1.2 In the summer of 2002 the Trustees were obliged to make the entire staff of PressWise redundant, following late payment of promised Home Office funding for the RAM Project. However the staff remained committed to sustaining the Trust's reputation, and continued to seek funding and honour contracts. By the autumn a rescue package funded by the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation and the Home Office saw all staff reinstated, and the pace of work picked up yet again.
- 1.3 Promoting ethics in journalism is a hard path to follow, finding the funding to sustain our efforts has proved even more difficult. This year we have had to engage in a prolonged process of consultation, and staff have had to devote more of their time to the draining and demoralising pursuit of fresh sources of funding while sustaining our core services.
- 1.4 The year began with the Trust committing itself to a programme of expansion, based on a lengthy process of internal reassessment launched at a weekend seminar for staff and freelancers held in the summer of 2001. The Trust's widely disseminated brochure '*Towards better journalism*' summarised the work and purpose of PressWise to date, and outlined the Trust's plans for the future.
- 1.5 The Trustees took the view that, having established a charitable organisation with an impressive track record, to become more effective within the UK media scene PressWise needs to have a dedicated, self-funding **research unit** to analyse aspects of media coverage, make sense of the wealth of material gathered so far, and produce materials of benefit to the public, to media practitioners and to media regulators.
- 1.6 It also needed a dedicated **training unit** to apply the lessons from our advice services and research more systematically, delivering training for media professionals as well as providing assistance to the public through the voluntary sector.
- 1.7 Sitting between these two and in part subsidised by them would be the Trust's free **advice service** for members of the public with complaints about unethical media behaviour. This would need to remain independent of vested interests.
- 1.8 The Trust had in mind the creation of a Centre for Media Affairs, which might combine the efforts of a range of other like-minded bodies associated with consumer rights and media practitioners. This might be a joint endeavour or one in which the Trust might play a formative but subsidiary role. The over-riding intention would be to investigate the formation of partnerships to broaden the impact of new thinking about ethics in the media and to find ways of sharing the cost of administration, staff and premises.
- 1.9 The process began with submission of a draft development plan based on internal discussions to the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, and the initiation of discussions with the putative Institute of Communication Ethics (ICE), the Media Society, the Institute for Global Ethics (IGE), the International Communications Forum (ICF), the Media Forum,

Index on Censorship, Article 19, the Frontline Club, and a number of academic institutions, all of which were working on similar ideas.

- 1.10 Following the attendance of Associate Director Bill Norris at a Media Society/IGE conference held at St George's Windsor, and meetings between Trustees and key figures from these groups, the PressWise Director was authorised to develop relationship through a joint working party which organised two major consultative events at St George's Windsor in December 2002 and at The Guardian News Centre, London in March 2003.
- 1.11 From these events emerged the Journalism, Media Ethics and Democracy Steering Group and an advisory panel representing a wide range of media and consumer/citizen groups committed to the creation of a 'centre for media affairs'.
- 1.12 Meanwhile the Trust's draft Development Plan was finally revised to form the basis of renewed grant applications. At its core is the view that in the post-Communications Act environment of OFCOM, and a reformed Press Complaints Commission, the Trust has an especially important role to play applying its contacts, experience and expertise to improve the standing and standards of journalism.
- 1.13 The future of PressWise lies in facilitating dialogue between the media and the public it serves, as well as providing information and advice to the public. Our aim for the coming year is to consolidate the Trust's capacity to deliver services by hiring more specialist staff and expanding so we are better placed both to influence public debate and generate revenue, especially from research and training.
- 1.14 We shall maintain our attempts to build partnerships with a view to establishing a self-sufficient 'centre for media affairs' as a focal point for information, research and training and public discourse about the role of journalism and media ethics in a democracy.
- 1.15 Our experience over the years has demonstrated that there is enormous demand for the expertise that we have gathered – especially overseas.
- 1.16 Consultancies and training programmes in many different parts of the world have earned PressWise revenue to subsidise its core activities in the UK, strengthened the Trust's reputation, and broadened its knowledge-base.
- 1.17 However, we are conscious that this has reduced opportunities to make our presence felt in the UK, and the Trustees are keen to refocus attention on the rapidly changing media scene here especially given the promised merger of broadcasting regulators into a lighter touch regime under OfCom and the advent of a new Chair at the Press Complaints Commission.

2. ACTIVITIES

a. Advice and support work

1. The Trust has continued to provide a prompt advice service to complainants, assisting several with the processing of complaints through the media regulators. As a result of one initiative the Press Complaints Commission agreed to ask its Code Committee to consider revisions, which would provide protection against publicity for people who take racial harassment case to industrial tribunals, an issue in which we have engaged the support of the Commission for Racial Equality.
2. The Trustees noted that the number of enquiries received from members of the public seeking free, confidential advice about instances of media intrusion and inaccuracy remained relatively low, averaging 3 enquiries a week.
3. Publicity about the Trust's financial insecurity, its continuing reliance on overseas contracts and project work, and lack of profile may explain this reduction in 'core activity' however the Trustees remain convinced of the importance of providing a service especially to those referred by Citizen's Advice Bureaux and other voluntary sector organisations.
4. The Director compiled a substantial submission to the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee enquiry into Privacy and Media Intrusion, including notes on significant causes of concern about media practices, The Chair and Director appeared before the Select Committee, and a substantial number of the Trust's recommendations were incorporated into the final report of the Committee.
5. The Trust has kept a watching brief on passage of the Communications Bill and supported moves to bring self-regulation of the print media within the scope of OfCom given the plans to lift restrictions on cross media ownership and the convergence of communication technologies. We worked with other groups on amendments to the Bill to ensure that the new regulatory environment takes into account the interests of citizens at least as much as it complies with the demands of the commercial media interests. A letter went to several hundred MPs stressing the need for a rethink on media regulation.
6. As the year ended discussions had started about conducting a study of satisfaction levels among complainants to the Press Complaints Commission the report of which could be used to generate debate and interest in a more academic research.

b. Refugees, Asylum-seekers and the Media

1. Now in its fourth year, this project now has an international reputation, and won support from the Home Office for its efforts to improve coverage of refugee and asylum issues.
2. As well as continuing to produce a monthly electronic bulletin (edited by exiled journalists and sent to over 1,000 individuals and groups in the UK and Europe) and keeping the RAM Project website up-to-date, the Project undertook several important new initiatives during the year.
3. A series of regional Media Forums were held in Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds and Liverpool; next in the schedule are Dover, Cardiff and Glasgow, bringing together local newspaper and print editors and journalists with refugees and community organisations to discuss the problems associated with coverage of asylum issues. These events were attended by representatives of the PCC, the NUJ, and the Home Office. They were monitored by the Kings College-based Information Centre on Asylum and Refugees (ICAR). Their extremely positive report, which contained recommendations for all the parties involved, was distributed widely throughout the mass media. A major event is planned for London to complete the series.
4. With funding from Barrow Cadbury Trust, the Project was able to employ Nikola (Nick) Medic, an exiled journalist from Serbia, to rebuild the network of exiled journalists, which had been temporarily stalled, with the collapse of the UK-Refugee Media Agency. He assembled a network of about 130 exiled journalists from some 50 countries. We have negotiated special rates for them to join the NUJ, and are developing ways of engaging them more directly in the RAM Project.
5. Their details appear in an on-line and printed Directory of Exiled Journalists, which has been distributed to media editors as a way of extending the supply of contacts and interviewees for broadcasters and newspapers, and to open up other employment opportunities for network members, as part of our strategy to improve the quality of media coverage.
6. Nick's work also included helping the Director and the Project Manager to arrange an extremely successful training weekend in Bristol (*Working in the UK Media*, Bristol, 28-30 March) attended by over 30 exiled journalists, designed to introduce them to the UK media. Contributors included NUJ General Secretary Jeremy Dear, and representatives of the BBC and BECTU, with additional material supplied by *The Guardian*.
7. We entered into an agreement with local TV production company Omni and hired a film crew, directed by a Kosovan refugee, to record testimony from participants with a view to producing a video and obtaining further commissions relating to their experience of exile. We compiled 9 hours of fascinating footage and broadcast commissions are being sought which we hope will more than recoup the cost.

8. National Co-ordinator Terry Williams continued to provide advice, support and training to networks of people working with refugees around the country and attended several European events concerned with media coverage.
9. Communication Days and use-of-media training events were held in Exeter, Newcastle and Cardiff, in partnership with Amnesty International, the NUJ and the Welsh Media Forum, and support has been provided for media networks in various other dispersal areas, Nick Medic also made several media appearances and spoke at a number of public meetings, including A Princes Trust event at Liverpool Cathedral.
10. The National Co-ordinator and the Director took it in turns to represent the RAM project at a variety of events, including the Home Office *Positive Images* Working Party and the advisory panel for an Article 19 research project into media coverage of refugees and asylum-seekers.
11. Contacts with related European projects were sustained and both the National Co-ordinator and the Director spoke at events in Europe, including a Red Cross conference in Athens.
12. In its Annual Report the PCC noted the work of the project, with which it has continued to collaborate. The Home Office encouraged the project to seek funding for an extension, and funding was obtained to continue the work into 2003.

c. Suicide and the Media

1. The success of earlier work conducted by the Trust on behalf of Befrienders International led to new initiatives funded under the social responsibility programme of the multi-national Syngenta.
2. The training module devised by Charlotte Barry and the Director are designed to improve awareness and coverage of suicide issues and was tested by them and Arjum Wajid at a series of 12 workshops in the UK, Sri Lanka, Singapore and Pakistan.
3. As a result of consultations with journalists' organisations and suicide prevention groups, a set of international guidelines have been drafted and are to be printed in English, French and Spanish as a joint project with the NUJ and the IFJ.
4. PressWise is working with the Centre for Policy Alternatives in Sri Lanka (which has the highest suicide rate in the world) to monitor the media and develop a media-training scheme as part of the post-civil war reconstruction programme.

d. Children and the media

1. Throughout the year the Trust has maintained a watching brief on issues relating to children's involvement with the media.
2. The Director continued to contribute to the European Young People's Media Network and the MAGIC network, working with UNICEF and the IFJ to support children's participation in the media.
3. The Trust was commissioned to monitor work being carried out by the IFJ in the Asia/Pacific region based on our training materials on the reporting of children.
4. PressWise also contributed to the latest edition of Save the Children's *Interviewing Children* booklet, and UNICEF has asked the Trust to update our internationally acclaimed handbook *The Media and Children's Rights*.

e. Media appearances

1. Staff contributed to a variety of radio and TV programmes, including BBC Radio 4's *The World Tonight* on the Cherigate affair and the functions of OfCom.
2. Editorials by the Associate Directors have been taken up by the *UK Press Gazette* and *The Journalist*, and the Trust has also supplied information and advice to researchers for a number of radio and TV current affairs and drama productions on aspects of media ethics.

f. Websites

1. During the year the Trust's website (www.presswise.org.uk) was redesigned by Wired Media to make it more user-friendly. Material from the existing site has been edited and transferred to the new format.
2. The eventual aim is to make the new site more interactive. Eventually it will include a Forum for debate on media ethics issues, and a Right of Reply section, which will allow instant responses to inaccurate reporting. These features will not be activated until sufficient funds have been raised to employ dedicated full-time staff.
3. Both the main PressWise website and the RAM project site (www.ramproject.org.uk) (managed by the Projects Administrator) continue to receive an average of 1,000 'hits' per month.

g. Other contracts

1. The Director and Associate Director took part with survivors, journalists and academics in consultations organised by Edge Hill College Centre for Studies in Crime and Social Justice on *The Role of the Media in Reporting Disaster and Tragedy*. The Trust also contributed to an NUJ event on *Reporting the Vulnerable*, and the Director was co-opted to serve on the NUJ Ethics Council.
2. The Director also participated in an IFJ planning conference in Croatia to devise a training programme for journalists in the Balkan region, and PressWise was asked to contribute to an IFJ/UNICEF conference in Nairobi on reporting children, which had to be postponed following the Mombasa bombing.
3. The Trust has been asked to consider undertaking ethics training around urban renewal issues with UN Habitat (also based in Nairobi) and a Media Institute in Morocco requested assistance with the development of an exchange program designed to improve understanding among European journalists about Middle East culture and politics.
4. A steady stream of inquiries from journalism/media students has been dealt with as promptly as other commitments allow.

3. STATUS, AIMS AND OBJECTS

1. The PressWise Trust is a limited company (No. 3747192) and a registered charity (No. 1076002), operating from Unit 38, Easton Business Centre, Felix Road, Bristol BS5 0HE. Originally set up as a voluntary organisation in 1992, it had previously operated as a not-for profit company.
2. The aims and objects of the Trust are:
 - A. *To promote for the benefit of the public compliance with ethical standards of conduct and with the law by journalists, broadcasters and all others engaged in or responsible for the media, in the United Kingdom and elsewhere, in particular (but not exclusively) by:*
 - i. *the provision of advice and assistance (not including individual representation except where the individual affected has insufficient means to afford legal or other specialist assistance) to members of the public concerning actual, possible or apprehended breaches of some recognised ethical standard or law;*
 - ii. *the advancement of the education and training of the public, of media students and professionals, and of all others engaged in or responsible for the media in respect of recognised ethical standards and the law;*
 - iii. *the education of the public and the carrying out of research (and the publication of the useful results thereof) into:*
 - a) *the ownership, distribution, consumption, control and influence of the media;*
 - b) *the legal and ethical context and effect of relevant law, guidelines, policies and codes of practice;*
 - c) *the methods and means available to members of the public for securing correction, redress, or remedy in relation to media coverage and journalistic activity;*
 - d) *the prevailing standards of the media and of media coverage and journalistic activity;*
 - e) *the actual, possible or apprehended instances of unethical, unlawful, unfair or inaccurate media coverage and journalistic activity (including instances of bias or misrepresentation) judged against recognised ethical standards and the law.*
 - B. *To advance the education and training of the public and in particular members of charitable and non-charitable voluntary organisations in the UK and elsewhere in all forms of communication media and in particular the effective utilisation thereof.*

4. MANAGEMENT, STAFF AND OPERATING POLICIES

1. At the start of the financial year the PressWise Board was comprised of seven out of a possible 12 Trustees, chaired by Sir Louis Blom-Cooper. Others who served included Bob Borzello, Patricia Healy, Brian Jones, Desiree Ntolo, Julian Petley and Naomi Sargant. Matthew Taylor agreed to join the Board as from in April 2003.
2. During the financial year the Board met on three occasions.
3. During the year the following served as patrons of the Trust: George Alagiah, Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, Michael Cashman MEP, Jean Corston MP, Lord Gilmour, Prof. Ian Hargreaves, Bruce Kent, Alex Pascall OBE, Diane Simpson, Clive Soley MP, Linda Townley, Prof. Peter Townsend, Polly Toynbee, and Tony Worthington MP
4. Day-to-day management of the Trust's activities is the responsibility of the Director and Company Secretary Mike Jempson, who reports directly to the Board.
5. The Director and part-time Associate Director Bill Norris, continued to handle complainants, deal with media enquiries, and work on PressWise projects. With Bill Norris' relocation to France, journalism trainer Charlotte Barry was invited to join the Trust as a second Associate Director to assist with complaints and media work, while Bill Norris continued to provide assistance with the website.
6. During the course of the year the part-time Administrator Gary Williams moved on and the Trustees were pleased to welcome back Di Fricker as PA to the Director and Office Administrator, on a part-time basis. This is her third term of office with PressWise returning to PressWise for a third term. Project administration continued to be handled efficiently by Anna Kelson, as were the Trust's financial affairs, overseen on a part-time basis by Rupert Taylor and supported by part-time book-keeper Sarah Day. All their services are much appreciated.
7. The Trustees are grateful for the continued assistance provided by freelance journalists Charlotte Barry, Nick Cater, Maisha Frost, Arjum Wajid, and Terry Williams for their contributions to our project work and training commitments. We would also like to thank Steve Ward and Azzta Computers for IT support.

5. FUNDRAISING AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

1. PressWise would not have survived had it not been for the generous intervention of the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation during the financial year. We are extremely grateful for their continuing support.
2. The Trustees are also indebted to those who responded to our survival appeal including the Guardian Foundation, Eric Clapton, the Avenue Trust, Lord Donoghue, Robert Grover, Christine Hamilton, C. Hoare , Alan Howat, Polly Jenkins, P. Lockley, Chris Mullin MP, Maggie O'Kane , Earl of Portsmouth, Claire Raynor, Vanessa Redgrave, Ivor Rowlands, Lord and Lady Tugendhat and Dan Waddell.
3. Trustees are grateful to those who financed our project work, including the Barrow Cadbury Trust, the Home Office Challenge Fund, Syngenta and the International Federation of Journalists
4. The Trust is happy to acknowledge the continued assistance provided by honorary solicitor Mark Stephens of Finers Stephens Innocent, 179 Great Portland Street, London W1W 5LS.

Trustees' responsibilities

5. The Trustees are responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and for taking reasonable steps to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularities. Our Finance Officer ensures that full accounting records are kept by our Book-keeper in such a way as to facilitate presentation, with reasonable accuracy at any time, the financial position of the company and to enable the Trustees to ensure that the accounts comply with the Companies Act 1985, and with the Statement of Recommended Practice Accounting for Charities [2000].

Risk Assessment

6. The management committee has conducted its own review of the major risks to which the charity is exposed and systems have been established to mitigate those risks. Significant external risks to funding have led to the development of a strategic plan which will allow for the diversification of funding and activities. Internal risks are minimised by the implementation of procedures for authorisation of all transactions and projects to ensure consistent quality of delivery for all operational aspects of the charitable company. These procedures are periodically reviewed to ensure that they still meet the needs of the charity.

Reserves Policy

- 7. The Trustees have established a policy whereby unrestricted funds not committed or invested in tangible fixed assets ('the free reserves') held by the charity should be between 3 and 6 months of the resources expended, which equates to £25,000 to £50,000 in general funds. At this level, the management committee feel that they would be able to continue the current activities of the charity in the event of a significant drop in funding. It would obviously be necessary to consider how the funding would be replaced or activities changed. At the financial year end the free reserves, which amount to £40,217, do not reach this target level and the Trustees are considering ways in which additional unrestricted funds will be raised. In the meantime £10,000 has been designated as a staff redundancy reserve, as the first step towards implementing the Reserves Policy.

- 8. The accounts for the financial year have been prepared on the on-going concern basis according to established accounting policies, and give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity. In preparing this financial report the Trustees have taken advantage of special exemptions applicable to small companies.

- 9. The Trust's auditor is R.J.R. (Dick) Maule, BA FCA, of Bristol Community Accountants, 12 Picton Street, Bristol BS6 5QA. In accordance with s.384 of the Companies Act 1985, Dick Maule has expressed his willingness to be reappointed as auditor at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting.

- 10. Trust's bankers are the Yorkshire Bank, 5 Northgate Street, Gloucester GL1 2AH.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees:

Sir Louis Blom-Cooper (Chair)

Date:
