



Annual Report



1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024

Executive summary

This report looks at our goals and achievements over the past year, and how we have worked with the community to provide our core activities alongside trying to secure ongoing funding to enable continuation of the Charity following the ending of our National Lottery grant in March 2024.

Twenty twenty-three/four was the final year of our Five-Year Strategic Plan, in which we set out six strategic objectives that we continued to progress. These included continuing to deliver and extend our volunteering service and providing ongoing and new activities for individuals and groups, to maintain and enhance health and well-being. During the year we have been able to extend our programme and continue to forge constructive working relationships with other organisations and communities to benefit our own community and share our learning. This report also outlines our continued commitment to research and evaluation and our approach to seeking ways of ensuring our financial security and sustainability as a small charity in the future.

We finish by looking to the future, not only to 2024/25, but we have also developed our strategic direction for the next 5 years and we state our objectives. As a successful small charity, we need to continuously improve on what we do to meet the changing needs of our community as well as share our learning and help others to create valuable services in their own communities.

The Search for Funding...





Foreword from the Chair

This is our 8th Annual Report. Twenty twenty-three/four was always set to be a defining year in our history. It was the year that our 5-year National Lottery funding came to an end and was also the final year of our 5-year strategic plan.

It is rewarding to know that the vast majority of residents are happy with the support we offer and would like us to continue. This report summarises some of our work over the past year and focusses on our attempts to secure ongoing funding and to develop as an organisation for the benefit of a wider population.

Whilst Solva Care's main activities are highlighted here, the full range of projects led by Together for Change (TfC) is not included but can be found on their website <https://www.tfcembrokeshire.org>

Our research portfolio has continued to go from strength to strength due to the hard work of Sue Denman and the RME team. We are proud to have a national and international profile and to be able to use the evidence that their programme of work has generated to steer us into knowing how we can evolve.

Our profile and reputation together with the enthusiasm and dedication of our volunteers, staff and trustees have enabled Solva Care to develop new ideas to support wellbeing as well as becoming an active partner in negotiations regarding the continuation of general practitioner services in Solva.

As previously mentioned, our funding came to an end in March 2024. This grant had paid for the hire of premises, activities, and outings as well as our part time coordinator, activities assistant, clerk, and volunteer expenses. It enabled us to offer a free service to all. Due to the generosity of donors and fundraising activities we are able to maintain the service until September 2024. Trustees are working hard to seek ways of securing further funding and still hope one day to be fully sustainable. We will continue to update residents regularly via the village newsletter to keep everyone informed of our progress. Please wish us luck and support our efforts.

Best wishes to all,

Barbara

Barbara Bale
Chair Solva Care
Board of Trustees

Connecting our Community

Introduction

This report provides an overview of Solva Care's achievements over the period April 2023 to March 2024. This was the final year of our 2019/24 Strategic plan (updated post Covid), in which we set ourselves six strategic objectives. We outline below the activities and support we have provided over the past year to continue to meet these objectives and to help achieve our overall purpose of building a strong and resilient community where older people enjoy good health, security and dignity; and where they are informed and supported in their choices and respected for their wisdom and experience. We also report on our achievements based on the goals we set ourselves for 2023/24. Previous Annual Reports detailing our achievements over each of the past 5 years are available at <https://www.solvacare.co.uk/about-us/>

During the year we completed our strategic plans for 2024/29, which are outlined at the end of this report, whilst identifying the challenges we still face following the ending of our National Lottery funding in March 2024.

Finally, as we have had a presence in Solva for 9 years we hope that people know who we are and why we exist. However, we have included a summary of both in Appendices 1 and 2. Our overarching goal for every year has been to continue to maintain and improve our core activities to support the health and wellbeing of our community.

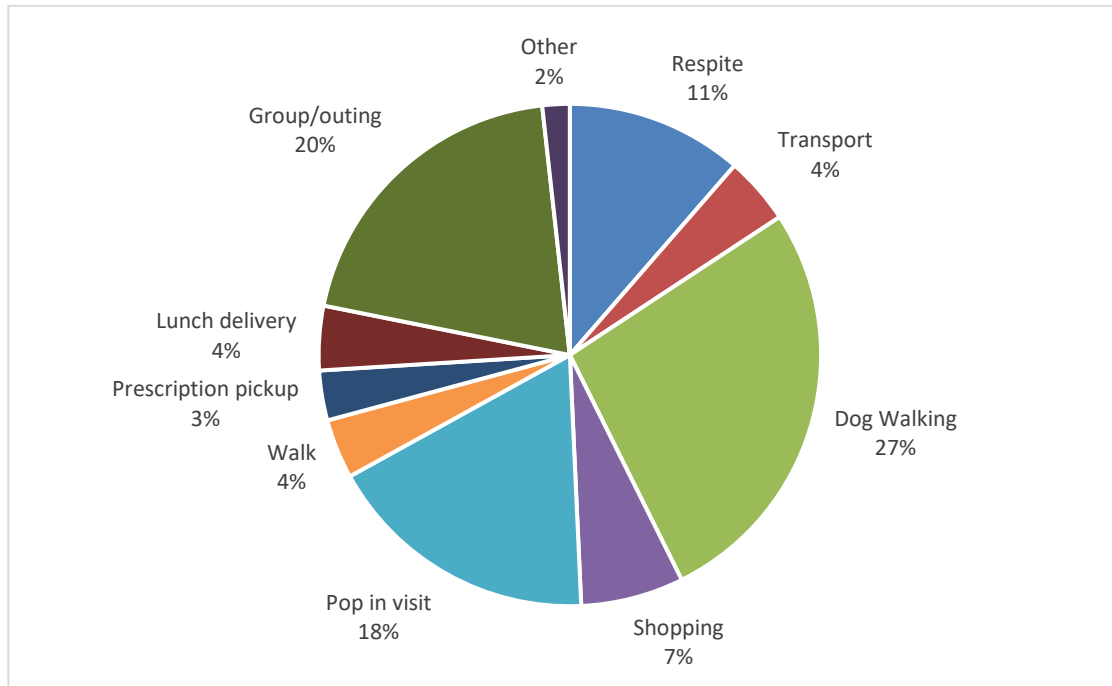
Maintaining and improving our core activities in 2023/24 – what we have achieved

Solva Care have continued to support people in the Parish of Solva and Whitchurch with a variety of services, which enable them to stay living in their own homes, even if they do not have family living nearby. Examples of support included picking up prescriptions, befriending, dog walking, shopping, short respite for those caring for a family member, signposting, and support to access statutory & other services and transport. This makes it possible for people to take part in community life and attend events they would not be able to get to without the help of transport.

The number of volunteers has stayed stable, and we currently have 45 volunteers giving over 200 hours/month. In the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, volunteers gave 2470 hours of support to more than 40 People in Solva. Included in this figure is 445 hours spent helping at events organised by us. In addition, trustees give on average 50 hours/per month to attend and prepare meetings plus administrative duties. Most volunteers are retired but there are some who are still working, and they help when they can. On average for each year we support between 40-50 people.



The pie chart below shows the proportion of hours given to the various activities.



(Dog walking usually involves the volunteer staying for a cup of tea and a chat).

(Note: 'Other' includes baking & preparing for events, helping with the monthly Solva Newsletter, and projects – e.g., Mouse trail and the Advent windows.)

As well as the regular support detailed above, we also supported a person with a damp problem in the house in contacting Pembrokeshire County Council and the local Councillor and we arranged to lend a dehumidifier. We supported another person who was at end of life, at home, whilst waiting for a care package to be put in place. Numerous volunteers went visiting, bringing food, making hot drinks etc.

At times Solva Care is the point of contact when people don't know what to do, or who else to contact, e.g. last summer the co-ordinator had a phone call early one morning from a person in Italy who owns a holiday cottage in Solva. An internal glass window had suddenly shattered and spread glass all over the stairs. The person staying alone in the cottage was trapped upstairs and quite shaken. A volunteer went over and hoovered up the worst of the glass and stayed to support the resident.

We regularly receive enquiries about finding carers or respite care and give advice about aspects to consider when applying to Social Services. We pass on information about local gardeners, trades people, solicitors, CAB, Age Cymru and electricians. On several occasions we have also lent out wheelchairs and walkers which we keep in the Memorial Hall & Football Hub.

Activities & Outings

We run our **Friday Club** every Friday afternoon in the Solva Football Hub, which is open to all. Between 13 and 18 people attend every week and almost half of them live outside of Solva. When the Ukulele Pirates plays once a month, there are so many people that we run out of chairs.

In June 2023 we organised for a **representative from the charity Frame to come to the coffee morning** in Solva Memorial Hall. He and his colleague advised on a variety of matters: Saving energy, home efficiency, scam advice, budgeting, recycling, Priority Services Register, carbon monoxide awareness and safety including free detectors for those who qualify, benefits checks, help to apply for water meters or social tariffs for Welsh Water. For those most in need – how to apply for Discretionary Assistance Funds from the Welsh Government as well as Fuel vouchers, warm packs etc.

We **treated the volunteers to a buffet brunch** in Café 35 in Lower Solva, as a small thank you for all that they do. There were twenty-four in total plus a couple of takeaway deliveries to volunteers who could not make it.

Also in June, **Sinfonia Cymru** came back to hold a concert in the Memorial Hall. The Royal Harpist was joined by a violinist, a flautist, and a cellist Tickets were free and forty-nine people turned up. We served refreshments after the concert, for a donation, and we also provided the musicians with something light to eat.

In July 2023 we arranged a trip to the **Bishops Palace in St Davids**. West Wales Walking for Wellbeing provided transport as the trip included a walk around the Palace. There were nine of us. The custodian did a guided tour, and we had brought tea/coffee and cakes with us.

We arranged a very pleasant **outing to Llys y Fran** in September 2023. Eight of us went in two cars. After a short walk around the reservoir, we had lunch in the café.

We held the **Solva Care AGM** on 26 September 2023 in the Memorial Hall, followed by refreshments and music by the Ukulele Pirates. Thirty people attended.

In December 2023 we arranged an **outing to St Davids Cathedral** with a guided tour by Revd Enid Morgan (trustee and volunteer), followed by a visit to the library and a talk by the librarian. Then we went for a hot drink and a snack at a local café. There were six of us going in two cars.

Over the winter, we organised eleven **film matinees** – with refreshments - in the Football Hub on Tuesday afternoons. We showed old classics and between 6 and 9 people attended regularly.





Projects

A couple of years ago, one of our trustees started a **Solva pop-up shop** twice a month – to reduce waste and to fundraise for Solva Care. It is held, with the help of volunteers, on a Thursday at the coffee morning in Solva Memorial Hall and sometimes on a Sunday at the Solva Football Hub when there is a football game on. The shop has raised over a thousand pounds since it started.

We had forty-six mice for the **2023 year's Mouse trail**, including a picture painted by Peter Taylor (the artist from Aberporth who inspired the trail and let us use his idea). It was situated on one of the sheds on the Quay. Mouse maps were available in Bayview Stores, Window on Wales and online with links from our Facebook page. The trail ended on 31 October 2023. We printed about two hundred maps and 60 tri-fold leaflets to go with the three information boxes placed around the village.

We organised **Sparkling Solva** again in December 2023 and we had an Advent Calendar Window for each day in December apart from 1 December, when one road - Brodawel - put on a great display of festive windows. The maps were available in Bayview Stores, Window on Wales, the Memorial Hall and the Football Hub as well as online. We printed 115 maps in total. We did a presentation with pictures of all the windows at the first Friday Club in January 2024 – for those who could not get around to look at the windows.

Satisfaction - how we demonstrate our impact

People are less isolated, lonely, and able to keep living in their own homes. They can attend events, make new friends, and socialise, all of which supports a feeling of belonging and enhances their wellbeing.

As important is the impact we have had on hospital admissions. The Local Health Board has evidence that since Solva Care started admissions of older Solva residents have decreased. In addition, whenever possible, we support people coming out of hospital which can enable them to be discharged earlier.

Since Solva Care was set up we have conducted regular village-wide surveys to ensure we are meeting the needs of our community. The last survey was completed in 2022 and indicated very positively that Solva Care is both needed and appreciated. The community offered ideas for additional activities or functions we may offer.

We hold an Annual General Meeting for all residents to report back on our activities over the year and engage them in what they would like to see in the following year. It is an opportunity to launch our Annual Report and share our tool kit and strategy. In 2023 we also included live music and refreshments.



Feedback from people we support

We ask for completion of evaluation forms for Friday Club and any events or activities we organise which help us to plan future activities. Also, we collect any feedback we receive such as thank you messages etc. Here are some of them:

"Just to say what a lovely day it was yesterday. I couldn't see much but it was a lovely day. A lovely group of people as well. Just talked to M, she enjoyed it immensely as well. Yes, it was a nice day, thank you very much. God bless. (Following an outing).

"Grateful thanks" (a Christmas card from a person whose dog we walk every day).

"Thank you again for all your kindness. It meant the world." (a card from the daughter of a lady we supported.)

"Thank you for all the great work you do for our community" (a Christmas card from a Solva couple).

"Many thanks for all you do for Solva Care" (a Christmas card from Friday Club attendees).

"Thank you so much for everything you do. You all keep me going" (message from a person we give respite to twice a week).

Working with others

We interact with other community groups and local events. We bring people to the weekly Luncheon club and Coffee morning, as well as help with volunteers for those events when needed. Solva Care took over running the Thursday **Coffee mornings** on a couple of occasions in February 2024. We involve local people in our events, such as Friday Club, to do talks, provide light exercise, craft etc. The local Ukulele band comes regularly to play.

We have close contact with Solva Surgery and the Co-ordinator has a room there every Friday morning for people to drop in. When it came to our attention that one person was hardly eating, we got nutri-drinks and suggested to Solva Surgery that they prescribe them. We keep learning and adapting what we do all the time. For instance, we have increasingly been asked to assist in dealing with statutory services, utility companies and applying online for blue badges, passports, bus passes etc. Help with IT and completing online forms and signposting to entitlements is increasing.

Just assisting in navigating the local systems and the statutory sector in Wales is invaluable especially for people with families outside of Wales. We have been asked to help with Personal Independence Payment appeals and have sat in on meetings with the GP, Social Services and Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), as well as helping organise a community alarm.

We have been supporting the St Davids Food Hub ever since it started with donations – items or money. Earlier this year we were contacted by the daughter of a person who passed away recently and who had a lot of frozen food. We liaised the St Davids Food Hub to donate the food to people



who needed it. We often refer people to the Alzheimer's Society. We have also liaised with Shalom¹ (who can try and get funding for respite for people with dementia) and made a new contact with a Dementia specialist nurse at Marie Curie.

We have liaised with the local schools and offer volunteering opportunities for students. During the last year we had a young volunteer who is doing a Welsh BaccaLaureate and who helped at Friday Club.

We helped promoting the People's Shed in St Davids and tried to encourage people from Solva to join. The Co-ordinator and Activity Assistant have visited the event. We also helped a group from Llanrhian, who were establishing a group for men with early onset dementia, suggesting suitable places for refreshments in Solva. We worked with West Wales Walking for Wellbeing and encouraged people to join the walks that one of our volunteers help with.

During the year, several people were having problems getting hospital transport to go to hospitals in Ammanford, Carmarthen and Pembroke Dock (due to some departments temporarily closing at Withybush). We wrote to the Pembrokeshire Association of Community Transport about this problem and received a response that they have had some new funding for community transport. We also provided transport when possible.

The co-ordinator and trustees were part of the Action Group formed to 'Save Solva Surgery.' The surgery is now a Health Board managed practice. Solva Care continues to be involved in supporting plans to hopefully develop a Health, Social Care, and Wellbeing Hub in the future.

A reminder of what else we planned to do during 2023/24 to meet our strategic objectives set for 2019/24

- **Securing ongoing funding** was our major focus this year. A small team was set up to consider ways of raising funds with the aim of one day becoming sustainable. Our ideas included social activities e.g. fêtes, fashion evening with preloved clothes, live music events etc.
- **Sponsorship** – we asked local active members of the community to undertake special events to gain sponsorship in aid of Solva Care.
- **Grant applications** – to funding bodies where we met the criteria, working with others as required.
- **Domiciliary Care** – we aimed to continue with our current plans in the hope of providing statutory care alongside our voluntary service, in a not-for-profit way.

¹ Shalom is a non-profit organisation that provide free palliative care to people diagnosed with a life limiting illness.

- **The establishment of a Health, Social Care and Wellbeing hub** is seen as a long-term vision with Hywel Dda Health Board ideally as a further extension of their managed GP practice in the village.
- During the year we promised to **keep our residents informed** of our progress and seek their support.

(Taken from Annual Report 2022/23 page 13)

Achievement of our goals

1. Securing ongoing funding

1.1 This was our most important focus for the year and remains so for 2024/25. Knowing that our National Lottery Grant was ending in March 2024, we had prepared both an exit plan and created a reserve policy and fund to enable us to continue until September 2024.

Towards the end of 2023 we met with representatives of the National Lottery to discuss our achievements over the past 5 years, and to explore our options for securing further funding. Whilst our success is well known and acknowledged, the fund does not incorporate support of a 'core service' as Solva Care has become. Their focus remains on supporting organisations trying to set up new services, to ensure more people benefit from limited monies. They did however support the idea of spreading the Solva Care model beyond our current area, to develop a new service so that other communities could benefit in the same way as Solva and Whitchurch residents.

At the end of 2022, *'Together for Change'* had successfully led and completed *'The 4 Wards Project'*. Based on the evidence collected from the communities of St David's and Llanrhian, recommendations had included exploring the possibilities of including a similar service to Solva Care. Having met with both City and town Councils this option is being further explored. Further information about *The 4 Wards Project* can be found on the website https://www.tfcembrokeshire.org/en_gb/work/the-4wards-project/

Early in 2024, we realised that this process and the process of applying for a joint grant would take longer than our current reserve fund would support. We met with another funding body – *'The Waterloo Foundation'* to discuss their criteria for a grant that would enable Solva Care to continue for a further 6 months and provide time for any joint working with St Davids and Llanrhian to be explored. An application has been developed and submitted. We await the outcome.

1.2 Fundraising and Sponsorship

We have benefitted from the generosity of local residents and their families and organisations who have donated funds to Solva Care over the past 8 years. Voluntary donations have enabled us to provide a totally free service. However, we have been asked by funding bodies to consider how to ensure a steady income to enable us to part match-fund any award given to us. In response we set



up 'Friends of Solva Care' to encourage people to give a small regular donation via a standing order. This also allows for people to leave a gift in their will, should they choose to do so.

We have successfully encouraged people in our community to undertake sponsored activities, to which we are extremely grateful. Regular income from the Solva shop and fund-raising events working with the Community Council have also added to our funds. We plan to continue social activities to raise funds and remain grateful for new ideas.

1.3 Keeping the community informed

We publish our activities monthly in the Solva and St Davids newsletter and advertise by posters any special events. Any news regarding our future or funding is also posted as soon as possible.

2. Domiciliary Care

Although we continued with our efforts to set up a domiciliary service locally throughout 2023, our funding to support this work ended in November.

Whilst we have not been able to create a freestanding domiciliary care service for Solva and St Davids, we continue to maintain links with CIC Neyland. Solva Care has worked with CIC Neyland to share our experiences in providing our service, including the Solva Care Toolkit and to help Neyland develop their own volunteer service.

Currently, the concept of Solva Care developing a domiciliary care service with CIC Neyland is not viable due in part to the lack of recruiting Carers who are willing to work in Rural Domiciliary Care. The hours of work are unsociable, the work is challenging, and clients care is often required three times a day over a seven-day period. The hourly rate of pay at £11-£12.50 is considered too low to attract potential carers. Recruitment has therefore been very challenging. Furthermore, at the time of writing this report, the demand for care provision in Solva and Saint Davids is not sufficient to support an additional service in our local rural areas.

During 2023, Pembrokeshire County Council has reviewed service provision areas and categories (urban, rural, extra rural) across the County and has allocated greater funding for rural and extra rural areas for care packages to try and fill care gaps in these areas. The demand for care in our local community can therefore be met by existing care providers. Therefore, there is no benefit in Solva Care attempting to establish another care provider and we would not be able to generate any income in this area in the current climate.

Solva Care does work closely with two independent care providers in Solva, who deliver personal care to 10-13 clients at any one time. It should be noted that Solva Care volunteers are also supporting some of these clients through our volunteering service.

We will continue to monitor demand and provision for care and review the situation regularly.



3. Establishment of a Health, Social Care and Wellbeing hub – Long term goal

This work began following the retirement of our local GP in 2023. The resulting Stakeholder group led by Hywel Dda Health Board continues to engage with the wider areas of St Davids and across the whole Peninsula to secure a long-term solution to meet the primary health care needs of the population. This work is ongoing with Solva Care represented.

Together for Change (TfC)

Our programme of research has continued to develop and is led by Together for Change (TfC). TfC work closely in partnership with communities and organisations across the sectors, to improve opportunities for people to live well in their communities. TfC received funding in September for three years to work with and for communities in Pembrokeshire. Regular updates and information are shared with the Trustees to benefit the charity.

TfC has progressed its three strategic aims to: foster a shared language and understanding about communities through leadership and collaboration; build knowledge, skills, and capacity to ensure robust and credible evidence about communities; and ensure active community participation in decision making processes.

TfC has supported the ongoing development of an integrated Peninsula Wellbeing Hub and the integral role of Solva Care within the model. Knowledge to benefit the development of the Hub has been shared from TfC's project work which includes the 4Wards Project and the Asset Map Project. TfC have also produced several papers on integrated models of care to help and inform the process.

Further information about TfC and the programme of work can be found on the website <https://www.tfcembrokeshire.org>

Looking to the future - Goals for 2024/2025

Our 2024/29 Strategic Plan covers 4 broad priorities.

- Continuing to provide our core activity which involves connecting people to ensure that our older individuals are valued and have tailored support to live happy and fulfilled lives in their own homes; and are able to engage fully in community life.
- Urgently securing ongoing funding to maintain and enhance our services.
- To extend our reach and share our learning to adjacent communities in the Peninsula, specifically St Davids and Llanrhian. And to continue to contribute to third sector models of practice to benefit other grassroots rural communities in Wales.



- Continuing to evolve to meet the needs of our own community, within the scope of our activities by providing additional events which focus on wellbeing, and which extend to all adults, (with a focus on older people) but where appropriate include younger adults as participants or volunteers.

We have also set ourselves the following six Strategic Objectives

1: To maintain and continuously improve delivery of a high quality and effective voluntary service.

2: To ensure continuation of Solva Care for the next five years and beyond, by securing ongoing funding by collaborating with other communities.

3: In addition to our existing activities focusing on individuals we will introduce new ones to ensure a comprehensive coverage of health and wellbeing issues and concerns including group activities that maintain and enhance health.

4: We will maintain our constructive and enduring working relationships with other organisations to benefit our community and other communities in Wales and beyond.

5: We will continue our commitment to Research Monitoring and Evaluation (RME) and pursue the following priorities working with 'Together for change' (TfC).

6: Ensure effective and efficient management of the Charity.

Specific goals for 2024/25 will depend upon our success in achieving ongoing funding and on our progress in working across the peninsula. Our 2024/25 Annual Report will revisit all achievements across our priority areas and will summarise our advancement in meeting our strategic objectives.

Conclusion and looking to the future

Solva Care was set up with and for the people of Solva parish. The demographics of the village are continuing to change overtime, but we remain exceedingly fortunate to have a wealth of willing and able volunteers to continue our mission to meet the expressed needs of our residents. This year we will use the information from our adjoining communities as well as our own to agree what we can do more of to promote the health and wellbeing of residents across the peninsula.

We continue to be grateful to local people for their fundraising efforts – the money is put to effective use and the community support is very encouraging. However, our work will always be seeking a more permanent funding basis, and we continue to negotiate with the County Council, the Local University Health Board and at Regional and National level. We continue to have a strong media presence which helps our informal methods to ensure a wider audience as well as local people know what we do.

Appendix 1

Who we are and why we are here

Solva Care is a community initiative focusing on providing specially designed social care support. The Pilot Project was originally set up by Solva Community Council in June 2015 and became a registered charity on 4 May 2017, offering friendly, local support to meet the expressed needs of residents in the parish of Solva. It is now a well-developed support system, which is run by a Trustee Board, a part-time Co-ordinator, a Clerk, and an Activities assistant, with the help of local volunteers.

Our aims are to maintain and improve the health and wellbeing of older people and others who need it in the village. We want them to have choices, be independent, feel well and play a part in village life. We connect people to add to neighbourliness and encourage friendships so that no one falls through the net. We also organise physical, cultural, and other activities, which are open to all. We try not to label or segregate people, and we encourage the generations to come together and mix.

The Co-ordinator currently works with over forty-five local volunteers, who are all DBS checked and have signed a confidentiality agreement. They are insured and provided with induction training. Most volunteers are retired people who are still active in the community but have time to spare to assist their fellow villagers. We also have a few young volunteers. Our volunteer numbers have gradually increased over the years and most remain involved in the charity. Continuity has been maintained and relationships are strong.

Together, as a community, we have set up an operational co-ordinated volunteer service that underpins the work of statutory health and social care services in our area. Solva Care aim to fill gaps between services from local authorities, paid care services, family, and friends. We still maintain close links with Solva Community Council, with a representative on our Board of Trustees.

The work of our volunteers and what we do

Through our volunteers we support people with a variety of things such as collecting prescriptions, pop in visits, short respite for family carers, dog walking, shopping, signposting and transport to the surgery, bank/post office, shops, village events etc. The Co-ordinator provides the link between the volunteers, people we support and a variety of other organisations.



Appendix 2 - The Solva Care Team



Barbara Bale
Chair of Solva Care



John Holland
Vice Chair



Mollie Roach
Trustee



Jonathan Higgins
Trustee



Sandra Young
Trustee



Enid Morgan
Trustee²



Sue Denman
Trustee &
TfC Lead



Maggie McKenzie
Trustee



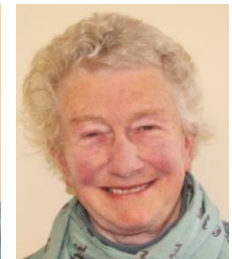
Susan Chichlowska
Trustee



Joe Griffin
Trustee & SCC
Representative



Fran Barker
Associate
Member



Carol-Ann Jones
Associate
Member



Bruce Payne
Treasurer



Lena Dixon
Co-ordinator



Lesley Robertson-Steel
Activity Assistant



Jessie Buchanan
TfC Co-ordinator

² Until December 2023