



Annual Report



1 January 2019 – 31 March 2020

Executive summary

In this report we have set out what we have achieved during our fourth full year of operation and what we hope to achieve in the next phase. Above all, Solva Care continues to be a community project – we work together to care for those in our community who need support ensuring good connections with our local GP surgery, local social workers and third sector organisations. We continue to learn, to record the lessons learned, and to apply the learning to improve what we do to build and maintain resilience and sustainability.

The Strategy of Solva Care for 2019-2024 set out six strategic objectives which we have continued to progress during 2019/20. These include 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. We describe in this report how we have extended our programme and forged constructive working relationships with other organisations to benefit our community and share our learning. The report outlines our commitment to research and evaluation and our approach to seeking ways of ensuring our financial security and sustainability as a charity in the future.

In particular the report highlights the outcomes and learning from the Innovate to Save Project and an ongoing commitment to work towards a care co-operative model through Direct Payments. Having benefitted from support to develop our online Toolkit which will shortly be made available as an edited paper version, our mission is to share and support other communities to provide local services matched to the needs of their local area.

We have outlined our new activities and the benefits we think they bring. Our work is both rewarding and appreciated with some of the comments from our villagers included. When the time is right (post Covid-19 lockdown) we intend to survey people in Solva to ensure that we are continuing to provide what is needed and wanted to the best of our ability.

As stated earlier, we do not work alone and intend to continue to work with and learn from others, outlining in the final section some thoughts for our short, medium- and longer-term areas for development.



Foreword from the Chair

As Chair of Solva Care I am pleased to present our fourth Annual Report. This year we are particularly grateful that funding for the next five years has been secured from the Big Lottery/People and Places fund, who have expressed interest in our project. This allows us to plan ahead with confidence, to further develop the project and will enable us to support other communities seeking to set up their own care systems.

The Trustees would wish to put on record our appreciation of the work of our volunteers and of our Co-ordinator and her staff. It is they who deliver the person-centred care which is focussed on individual need and responsive to circumstance. Thanks to our Community Council for their support and to our partners, the people we support and all those who have helped us get to where we are now. Together, we have been able to make a real difference to people's lives and wellbeing and the community has benefitted too. We can all be proud of what we have achieved so far in Solva Care. We will be working with other communities in 2020 seeking to set up their own care projects. We can offer support, mentoring and lots of experience – and will also be able to learn ourselves, as we see how other communities cope with caring for their people.

As we began work on this report, earlier this year, the Corona Virus epidemic began. We were fortunate; Solva Care was up and running, Solva Community Council was supportive and pro-active, the Solva shop expanded its services. Cwtch boxes got sent out. From day one we all worked together, the whole community, to support each other and we will all keep going.

My thanks to our community- the people living in Solva - who have given us wholehearted support. Thanks also to those people who have taken part and who will be working with us in the future, not just to carry on the good work, and to support other communities create their own systems of care, but to develop and extend our project so that our community is sustainable and able to respond positively to the challenges ahead.

Mollie Roach,
Chair
Board of Trustees

Connecting our Community

Introduction

This report provides an overview of Solva Care's achievements over the period from January 2019 to April 2020. Whilst we have included our plans for 2020/21, at the time of writing the Covid-19 pandemic and resulting lockdown remains in place. As a result, we have had to adapt accordingly, which will be detailed in our next annual report.

Starting with a brief background to remind our readers who we are and why we exist, the remainder of the report focusses on what we do and what we have achieved during 2019/20.

Who we are and why we are here?

Solva Care is a community initiative focusing on providing specially designed social care support. It was originally set up by Solva Community Council as a pilot project in June 2015 and became a registered charity on 4 May 2017, offering friendly, local support to those who need it in the parish of Solva. It is a well-developed support system, which is run by a trustee board and a part-time co-ordinator with the help of local volunteers.

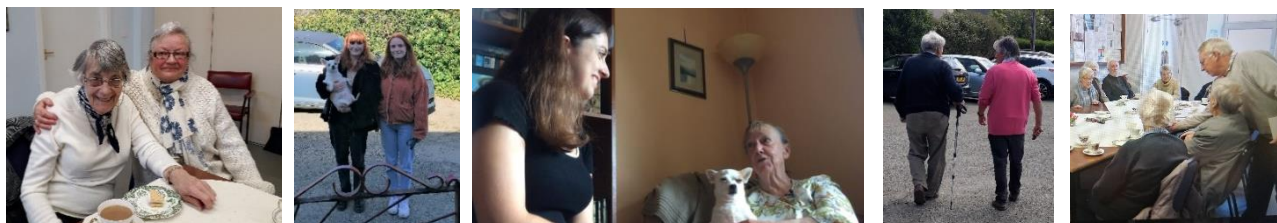
The aims are to maintain and improve the health and wellbeing of older people and others who need it. We want them to have choices, be independent, feel well and play a part in village life. We connect people to add to neighbourliness and encourage friendships so that no one falls through the net. We also organise physical, cultural, and other activities, which are open to all.

There are 36 local volunteers, who have all been DBS checked, signed a confidentiality agreement, are insured and all had induction training. Most volunteers are retired people who are still active in the community but have got some time to spare to assist their fellow villagers. We also have some young volunteers.

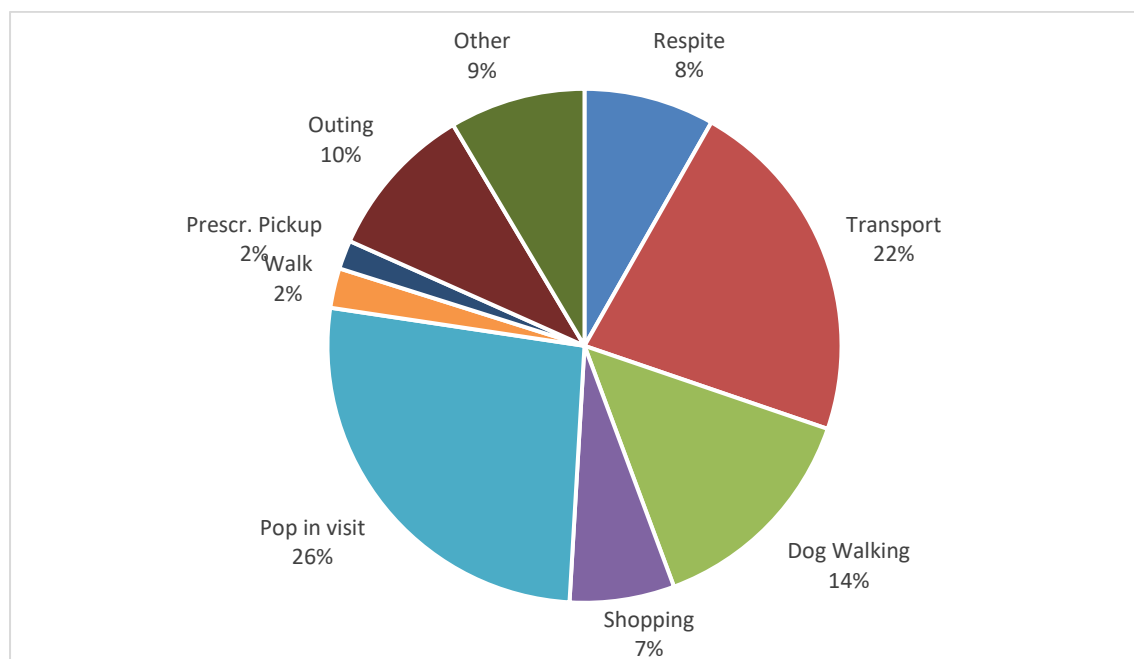
Together, as a community, we have set up an operational co-ordinated volunteer service that underpins the work of statutory health and social care services in our area. Solva Care is filling the gaps in the provision of services from local authorities, paid care services, family, and friends. We still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

The work of our volunteers and what else we do.

Through our volunteers we support people with a variety of things such as shopping, collecting prescriptions, pop in visits, short respite for family carers, dog walking, 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.



During the period 1 January 2019 to 31 March 2020, 36 volunteers gave 1678 hours of support to over 40 People in Solva. In addition to this, 500 hours were spent helping at events organised by us in Solva Hall and 68 hours attending training. Trustees spent on average 70 hours per month on admin and meetings.



We arrange a weekly 'Friday Club' in the village hall – two hours of music, gentle exercise, craft, games/quizzes, reminiscing and other activities. Local artists, musicians and others give their time for free and in 2019 Span Arts ran a couple of sessions on reminiscing.

We also organise outings, e.g. visits to a café' for afternoon tea or to a farm producing ice-cream, shopping trips etc. We regularly arrange to bring people on a minibus to the Relaxed Cinema Screenings at Theatr Gwaun in Fishguard. These events and outings are open to all and are well attended including several people living with dementia and their carers. During 2019 the VC Gallery in Haverfordwest arranged several art sessions at their gallery in Haverfordwest, which we brought people to.

We organise away days for the volunteers every other year and another, smaller get-together in between. In April 2018 we arranged a trip to Picton Castle as a thank you and to give the volunteers a chance to meet each other. Unless they are helping at one of our events, they usually 'work' individually, so it is important that they get to meet up on occasions. During the year there were two talks: 'Plan for your future health, not just wealth' which was followed by group work on the question 'How can we get people to engage and come to events & activities?' The second talk was about 'Direct payments for Social Care' followed by further group discussion.

Some volunteers visited the Virtual Dementia Bus in April 2019 to experience what it may feel like to live with the illness. Swansea University organised a workshop on 'Most Significant Change' for us attended by trustees, volunteers and representatives from other organisation who we invited.

What we planned to do during 2019/20 to meet our strategic objectives

Our plans included:

- Offering and providing timely, high quality, person centred support, to enable people to feel well and remain in their own home. We also planned to offer respite for carers to relieve stress and isolation and continue to develop Solva as a dementia friendly village.
- Managing social activities on a weekly basis, which would be open to all and involve a stimulating mix of music, movement, and the arts. WE developed a coordinated arts programme of in-house and partnership projects and organised outings, chosen by older people themselves, for a change of environment. To assist with this, we employed an Activities Assistant.
- Developing and trialling a course of keep fit classes suitable for older adults to enhance feelings of physical and mental wellbeing, including Pilates, Tai Chi, gentle exercises, and walking.
- We also focussed on practical skills, starting with a Men's Sheds type of pilot project, that may in the future involve men and women.
- We continued to encourage and support the uptake of Direct Payments and create a cooperative, or cooperative style organisation, for those wishing to pool and purchase their own wellbeing and care services. We also wanted to put together a register of local people who work as carers and would be looking at ways of supporting those carers.
- Continue to maintain our local services register, so that the people we support could quickly find reliable local trades people – gardeners, cleaners, maintenance workers etc. and to involve our young people in the Project.

Above all, we wanted to concentrate on responding to individual need, to stay local and focus on keeping our whole community viable and sustainable.

What we have achieved this year

During 2019 we have undertaken a major project in partnership with Pembrokeshire County Council funded by *Innovate to Save* to see if it was possible to set up a care co-operative through Direct Payments. The aim of the project was to find out whether creating a user and carer micro-enterprise (people joining forces with their allocations to collectively purchase services) had any benefits. We organised a Direct Payments Seminar in Solva Memorial Hall in October 2019 to present the report and findings from this project. (The full report can be downloaded from our website (<https://www.solvacare.co.uk/our-research/>))



This challenging but exciting work is continuing, through an extension of funding from the Leader Project, and we hope to use what we have learned to help develop a care system which will help those in need to secure care more suited to their circumstances. We also hope that it will support those seeking a greater degree of independence and responsibility for their own care.

The Solva Care Toolkit, (<https://www.solvacare.co.uk/toolkit/>) which was created to support others wanting to set up a similar project, has been finalised online and an edited version has been published ready for distribution to other communities.

In autumn 2019 we introduced chair-based yoga for the second half of Friday Club to improve people's balance, strength, and movement. A weekly gentle exercise class for over 50s was also started in Solva Memorial Hall, we which we publicised and promoted to encourage participation. In February 2020, we initiated a dance workshop and a Wellbeing Walking Group, which were both sadly interrupted after the first session, due to Covid-19 lockdown.

During the year we also started occasional sessions after the weekly Luncheon Club, called 'Senior Solutions' where people could bring and demonstrate gadgets, they had to make everyday life easier, e.g. to make opening car doors and putting socks on easier. With the help of ATEB we arranged 4 drop-in sessions after the weekly coffee morning, where people could get support in using their iPad and internet. In addition to this, we assisted with applying for new bus passes. A Solva Care volunteer was supported to start a Men's Shed, initially based in the Football Clubhouse.

In 2018, Solva Care set up and supported a community-mosaic arts project that involved members of the community learning how to create mosaics, and putting the skills learnt to use by producing mosaics to decorate a set of unattractive village steps. This year we ran a second project with mosaics classes to decorate the flower trough and walls outside Solva Memorial Hall to celebrate VE Day. The project aimed to demonstrate wellbeing outcomes amongst participants from the community who were involved in producing the mosaics.

To help widen our audience, together with a local Magician, (a member of the Magic Circle), we ran an 8- week Course in Magic for young people as well as adults. The age range of participants was from 11 – 82, with half of the participants being between 11 and 20.

At the end of the year we organised an event called 'Sparkling Solva', where people in the village undertook to decorate an Advent Window on a specific date – a 'living Advent Calendar'. A blog was set up with pictures of all the windows, for those who were not able to get around to have a look at them. A few days before Christmas volunteers and trustees walked, or drove, around the village stopping to sing at some of the windows followed by refreshments in Solva Memorial Hall.

What benefits have been achieved?

Solva Care firmly believe that evaluation of all our events and activities is essential to ensure that



we are meeting the needs of our people and can change/adapt accordingly. In line with this we evaluate Friday Club at the end of each term. During 2019 when participants were asked: What did you think about the Spring/Summer/Autumn Term of Friday Club?

we had the following feedback:

'a good opportunity to meet people and socialise'.

'It's good to (have) a sense of community'

'I've only been a few times but think it extremely good

'Excellent, wonderful'

'Very happy that Friday club is available'

'Lucky to have the opportunity to come here'

'Look forward to Fridays, enjoy meeting people'.

'enjoyable, good company and meeting people'

(Note: Pembrokeshire on Line ran an article on Friday Club 14 Feb 2020

<http://pembrokeshire.online/2020/02/solva-care-friday-club/> and BBC Wales did a piece with one of the people we support and a young Solva Care volunteer in August 2019

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-49475078>)

Helen Morris, who runs the chair-based yoga at our Friday Club wrote a report on the benefits of this - *Chair based Yoga Benefits – Solva Care, Friday Club. Review of Outcomes, benefits and progress from 2019 sessions*. The following is an extract (the full report is available on our website):

It was evident with most of the clients that the sessions brought about a sense of confidence. Confidence continued to build through the whole term, most noticeably when doing the standing poses and balances, with a number of individual victories. Some of the clients were quite challenged by the balances and their confidence grew as they achieved what seemed impossible to them in the first instance. Over the term confidence grew and the group grew in physical strength. This meant that more repetitions of movements were possible. Clients were also able to participate in more complicated postures as their confidence and ability grew.

Perhaps the greatest benefit, which was also reported by the participants, was stress reduction. All of the participants were considerably and visibly relaxed during the sessions and especially at the end.

The people attending the Mosaic Project as well as the Magic classes also reported an improved sense of wellbeing. They had learnt new skills or reinforced those that they already possessed. New social connections across the ages were also facilitated by the project. All participants in the magic classes reported gaining high levels of enjoyment from the project and the majority said they had increased their skills. More than half of the participants reported gaining a greater sense of dexterity and said that they would like to do more courses and were interested in attending further community activities.

What we have learned this year and how we are changing to meet future needs

We are confident that Solva Care's structure with a Co-ordinator and volunteers enables us to initiate different things that may then take on a life of their own. The activities bring people together and increase a sense of community, involvement, and confidence. The result of this can be seen in the response to the Covid-19 crisis, which will be reported in detail in the 2020/21 annual report.

The importance of effective communication between trustees and employees to enable the sharing of documents and especially to comply with the new Data Protection regulations led us to a review to ensure an appropriate computer system. We therefore decided to set up a Microsoft Teams System (part of Microsoft Office 365), although the implementation was interrupted by Covid-19.

How we attempt to demonstrate our impact

We evaluate all activities and projects organised or facilitated by Solva Care. In addition, there have been two questionnaires to the community to find out what people think about Solva Care, the first one in 2013 and the second on 2016. We have prepared a third survey ready to go out when lockdown has lifted.

Importantly, we have appointed an Action researcher, who has helped to compile an agreed set of validated Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and intend to update our research strategy in light of our developing portfolio.

We have continued our partnership with Cardiff and Swansea Universities as joint applicants for research grants. This work is ongoing.

The importance of working with others

Increasingly we are engaging in the wider determinants of health. We were part of the community effort to buy Trecadwgan Farm to create a care farm. Although unsuccessful, we are encouraging the CBS (In full) to continue so we can grow healthy food locally, which older people would benefit from. We are part of the Solva Community Land Trust to ensure that the new £3 million housing development meets the needs of older people and to help keep our younger people in the village.

Throughout 2019/20 we have organised and attended several events. In April we held an Annual Meeting and Celebration. The theme was 'Come along and help plan how to spend the lottery grant'. We asked people to come up with suggestions of activities and had put white paper tablecloths on the tables for people to write on.



Also, in April, the Chair, vicechair and co-ordinator attended a Planed/LEADER event at Scolton Manor. The chair of our Research sub-committee attended and contributed to a workshop at the Wales School of Social Care Conference. She also chaired the afternoon session and spoke about Solva Care at the Health Care Research Wales Conference in October.

The co-ordinator presented a talk on 'How to bring people together to make better communities' at an Ageing Well in Wales event, Letterston in October. In November several trustees, the co-ordinator and a volunteer attended the Primary Care Conference in Newport where we also had a Solva Care stand. In December representatives from Solva Care participated in the Community Catalyst Event organised by Planed and PAVS.

In March 2020 Solva Care organised and led an awareness event at the Merlin Theatre. to generate interest in the Solva Care model. As part of this a short film was developed with the assistance of Planed.

To ensure our accessibility, our co-ordinator is available in Solva Surgery for two hours every Friday morning, for people to drop in, which also keeps us in regular contact with the Surgery. The Chair of Solva Care also keeps in touch with both Solva and St Davids surgeries. We bring people to Shalom, the hospice in St Davids, to relieve them of having to arrange transports to patients from Solva. We have been working on a Path Project in Solva together with Solva Community Council – to make parts of the village more accessible for everyone. This project is still ongoing but halted due to Covid-19.

We joined the Coproduction Research Network in 2019 as well as PCSN (Pembrokeshire Community Support Network) in 2020, to link and network with other communities in the county.

Our plans for 2020/21

We intend to continue to move towards working more closely with domiciliary care workers, trying to create a more integrated care system, and towards a preventative care programme which will keep people healthier for longer. We are also continuing to pursue our aim of the development of a domiciliary care service to run alongside the volunteer service. This is much more difficult to set up, but we will continue to work towards this end.

Our joint project with Rural Health & Care Wales "Cardi Care" was just starting at the beginning of 2020, when Covid-19 halted it. It is a proposed pilot project that will investigate whether our tool kit is able to be used by other rural communities as a basis of emulating and duplicating our community care model. This will be continued as soon as restrictions are lifted.

Furthermore, we have received top up funding from the Lottery to share learning with other communities. Work has started on that with two major online events planned for the summer 2020.

The work to support people of all ages to engage in activities, cultural and physical will continue.

Conclusion

We still lack security regarding long term funding. We are doubly grateful to local people for their fundraising efforts –the money is put to effective use and the community support is very encouraging. But our work needs 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.

Looking to the future – Longer term Strategies

Short term: we are looking at whether we can do more and do it better. Covid-19 has meant that we are supporting more people and more people are willing to help. We have started to contact people we are already supporting and asking what more we can do and are there things they may need to make the present situation easier.

Medium term: as lock-down is relaxed, people will be out and about more. However, many of those we support may still be reluctant to put themselves at risk. We are therefore devising ways of assisting them to meet up and join in with others whilst still staying safe. We are looking at whether we could work more closely with our surgery, Social Services, Withybush Hospital, to make things easier for Solva people.

Longer Term: as Covid-19 has affected our whole community, we have worked with Solva Community Council to extend our support to the whole community. Old and young, those who are fit and healthy and those who are not or who are ill. This joint approach is working well, so for the longer term we will be considering a more joined-up approach – both here in Solva and further afield.

The local community response has been the most directly effective in meeting the needs of the communities. We should not let local initiatives slip away as the crisis lessens. We want to find ways to build on it and to support Solva and other communities in defining and meeting their own needs at a local level. We wish to do more to influence planning at county, regional and national level to make community projects such as Solva Care sustainable long term.



Our cartoon Long John Solva, created by a local artist and used for the Solva Care Toolkit

