



Annual Report



1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021

Executive summary

As a result of the COVID – 19 pandemic 2020/21 has been a year like no other. Whilst some of our plans for the year had to be curtailed, this report sets out what we have been able to achieve during our fifth and most challenging year of operation, and more importantly, what we hope to achieve in the next phase, (Covid allowing). Above all, Solva Care has continued to be a community project – we have worked together to care for those in our community who needed support as far as restrictions have allowed, maintaining connections with our local GP surgery, local social workers and third sector organisations. We have continued to learn, to record the lessons learned, and to apply the learning to improve what we do in the future 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 and review during 2020/21. These include continuing to deliver and extend our volunteering service and providing ongoing and new activities for individuals, as far as was possible, to maintain and enhance health and well-being. We describe in this report how we have been able to extend our programme and forge 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 Together for Change Project alongside an ongoing commitment to work towards a local care service through Direct Payments (the PIP Project – Prevention Integration Partnership). Having benefitted from support to develop our online Toolkit, this has now been made available as an edited paper version, which we have distributed in hard copy to share and support other communities working to provide local services matched to the needs of their community. We also hosted a virtual discussion on the merits and uses of the Toolkit following circulation.

The report outlines the activities we have been able to provide 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 restrictions) 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

This is our fifth Annual Report, covering what we now think of as 'the year of Covid'. Last year, the plans we made for the coming year concerned working more closely with domiciliary care workers, trying to create a more integrated care system, and working towards a preventative care programme, to keep people healthier for longer. We also wanted to pursue our aim of the development of a domiciliary care service to run alongside the volunteer service. All this alongside our day-to-day work, responding to the needs of local people and working together in a mutually beneficial programme of care.

We have got very good at finding 'covid proof' ways of continuing our work. Working with the community, we have continued to offer support and our regular volunteers have been joined by many others, all willing to help. We have been flexible in our approach and have been able to respond to all requests for assistance. We are also making plans for our post-covid period, when people will be out and about more, but some may still be reluctant to put themselves at risk. We are therefore devising ways of assisting people to meet up and join in with others whilst still staying safe.

Covid-19 has affected everyone, and we have worked closely with Solva Community Council, meeting on a weekly basis, to extend our support to the whole community. This joint approach worked well, and 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 have made use of the top up funding we received from the lottery to make progress in working with other rural communities which are seeking to develop their own projects. *Together for Change* held several well-attended online events in June and November 2020 exploring what can be done to support other community projects that started up during the pandemic. Our work still 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.

Every year, I thank everyone who has helped - our Co-ordinator, our volunteers, our Trustees, the Community Council, the Surgery, the Bayview Stores, and the whole community. It works because we all work together. We have been able to make a real difference to people's lives and wellbeing and we all feel better for it. I say it every year and mean it every year. Thank you.

Mollie Roach,
Chair
Board of Trustees

Connecting our Community

Introduction

This report provides an overview of Solva Care's achievements over the period from April 2020 to April 2021. Whilst we have included our plans for 2021/22, at the time of writing the Covid-19 pandemic and lifting of restrictions is still ongoing. As a result, we may again have to adapt accordingly, as required. This will be captured 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 focuses on what we do and what we have been able to achieve during the past year.

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 and activities assistant, with the help of local volunteers. In addition, we employ 2 researchers specifically to deliver on our funded research projects.

Our 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 all¹.

We currently work with 50 local volunteers, some of whom volunteered for the first time in response to the pandemic. Volunteers are DBS checked, and sign 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 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. To meet the specific needs and coordinate our response to support of the community throughout the pandemic, a new task and finish group was established at the start of the first lockdown 23 March 2020, bringing together key voluntary groups, including Solva Care, with Solva Community Council. The group was called SNAKE (Solva Neighbourhood Action and Knowledge for Emergencies) and continued to meet until March 2021.



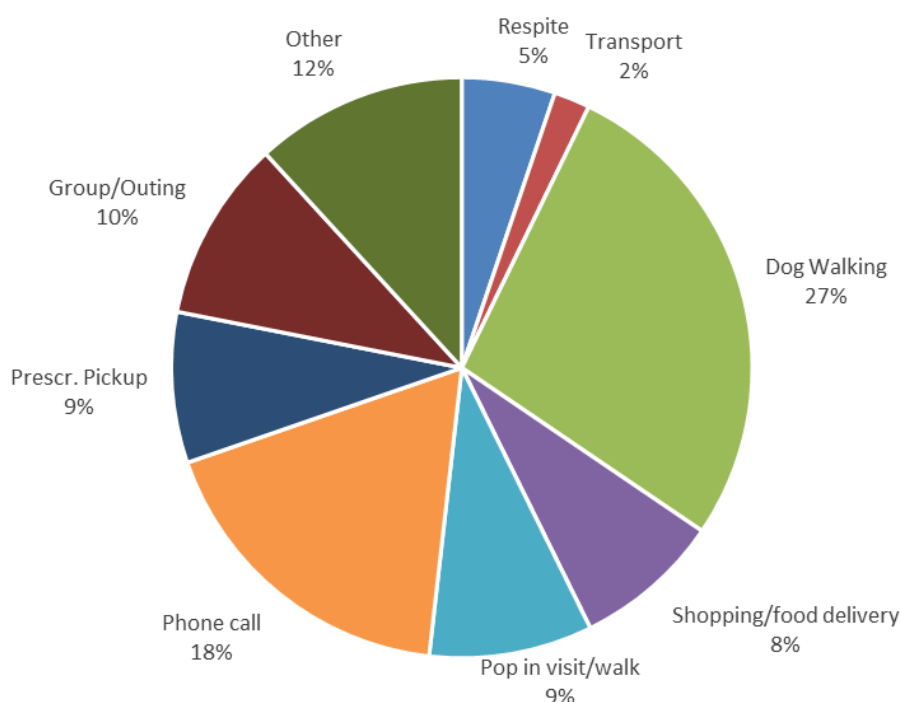
¹ As stated earlier, activities have been limited or adapted depending upon the varying levels of COVID – 19 restrictions during the year.

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.

In the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021, 40 volunteers (plus 51 extra volunteers during lockdown) gave 1255 hours of support to over 60 People in Solva. Included in this figure is 118 hours spent helping at events organised by us. Trustees spent over 140 hours per month on admin and meetings. Although some volunteers were shielding, they helped in other ways, for instance by making phone calls and baking.

(Note. 'Other' includes baking for events, IT support, interviews by a PHD student, projects – e.g., Mouse trail).



During the last 12 months, Covid 19 has affected the support we have been able to give. For a large part of the year, we had to stop all face-to-face support, cancel outings and activities and the planned Volunteer Day. Instead, we came up with other ideas to reassure people that they had not been forgotten, such as deliveries of afternoon tea, Valentine's cards cookies and story-writing groups. (For further details see page 7 **What we have achieved this year**).



What we planned to do during 2020/21 to meet our strategic objectives

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.

Taken from Annual Report 2019/20

Our plans also 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, which has not been possible during the pandemic.
- We have progressed our intent to start a Men's Sheds type of project, that may in the future involve men and women. Having made links with St David's Men's Shed, virtual meetings have continued.
- 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 build on our register of local people who work as carers and will be looking at ways of supporting those carers.
- Continue to maintain our local Trade 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 safe, viable and sustainable.



What we have achieved this year

Due to the pandemic, we had to suspend much of our support and activities for months at the time. Instead, we had to come up with other ways of connecting people. At the start of the first lockdown we set up a blog '*Solva Stories*, where people could share photos, stories, poems, recipes etc. We nominated people for a *Cwtch box*², for instance people who had recently had a bereavement, been ill or lived alone. We provided an *Outdoor library*, in a plastic storage unit on the Green, with donated books and DVDs. For *VE Day* on the 8th of May, we encouraged people to have tea in their front gardens and to decorate their houses with bunting. We also asked the volunteers as well as the people we support to phone each other.

In the summer, we devised a *Mouse Trail*, by asking people in the village to paint a mouse on a slab or stone and display it by their house or in their window. We had maps made by local volunteers that were available online and in local shops. The map, which was free of charge, included a quiz for children as well. As soon as we were able to meet outside, we arranged visits in people's gardens and walks. In August we delivered *Afternoon Tea* to thirty of our older people.

During the periods we were allowed to meet inside we arranged our weekly *Friday Club* in the football clubhouse - although for smaller numbers - with face masks, open windows, and hand gel. There were two hours of gentle exercise, craft, quizzes, talks and other activities. Local people mostly gave their time for free. We have continued to devote the first half of our weekly Friday Club to gentle exercise, provided by a local Qigong teacher, to maintain and improve people's balance, strength, and movement. We also help promote and refer people to the West Wales Walking for Wellbeing weekly walks. In addition, we provided people we support with exercise sheets to do at home and encouraged those who could, to use online facilities for yoga and other exercise. We also started *IT Support sessions* to help people get online.

In November we treated people to a *Fish & Chips* delivery in cooperation with the Solva Luncheon Club. In December 2020 we again organised our Living Advent Calendar event '*Sparkling Solva*', where 31 households in the village undertook to decorate an Advent Window on a specific date. We had to cancel our planned outdoor event on the village green, unfortunately, due to bad weather. We also delivered *Christmas cards and mince pies* to the people we support as well as *Christmas cards to all volunteers*.

In February 2021 we arranged a *Fish & Chips take away for volunteers* to thank them for all their support. We delivered *Valentine's cards and cookies* and for *St Davids Day Cawl & daffodils*. We started to give birthday cards to all volunteers and organised online *Writing for wellbeing* sessions run by a local writer and psychotherapist. We asked those who were not online to write a story on the theme '*Living/Moving to/Growing up in Solva*', which we copied and passed around so that everyone could read the others' stories.

² A box with treats such as chocolate, biscuits, soft drink, a plant etc.

The extension to our Leader project until September 2022 has enabled the project lead to continue to work with those delivering hands-on domiciliary care in Solva, so that between us, we can deliver seamless, user focused continuity of care. We have continued to maintain our local services register, so that the people we support can quickly find reliable local trades people – gardeners, cleaners, maintenance workers etc. and involve our young people in the Project.

PIP continues to maintain a register of local people who work as Carers and to look at ways of supporting those carers. Above all, Solva Care want to concentrate on responding to individual need, to stay local and focus on keeping our whole community viable and sustainable.

The Toolkit Dissemination Project has been developed by Solva Care and partner organisation PAVS and PLANED into a wider initiative to build on the positive effects of the pandemic. Called *Together for Change*, a programme of work has been agreed with community groups, and third and public sector organisations that will centre on supporting and sustaining local community groups. Solva Care is hosting *Together for Change*. Three workstreams are being focused on: a shared vision for community development, building and using research evidence, and providing support for community groups through shared learning and partnerships working. Together for Change hosted three popular masterclasses for community groups on making podcasts, using social media and film making. More sessions are planned. A hard copy of the Solva Care toolkit was sent to all Community and Town Councils in Pembrokeshire and is currently being evaluated. See website for the detail of the considerable achievements Together for Change www.tfcembrokeshire.org

The Cardi Care pilot project, a cooperation with Rural Health and Care Wales, that will investigate whether our tool kit can be used by other rural communities as a basis of emulating and duplicating our community care model, was disrupted by the pandemic but it is hoped that work can resume soon.

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. Below is feedback from some of our events and activities.

The Mouse trail:

We enjoyed being part of it, thank you. Customers who had collected maps from us came back and reported that they'd loved doing the trail and especially appreciated discovering more of the village. Look forward to whatever next.

Thank you... We had fun doing this and our 2 nieces really enjoyed being a part of it. Looking forward to the next one!

Thank you so much for organising it, really enjoyed seeing them around the village. Many thanks.

We helped a family, who live away, when their mother in Solva passed away: distributed plants and items from her house and passed clothes on to Shalom³. Cooker, crockery, and cutlery went to the football clubhouse. We found a place for the family to stay when they came down for the funeral during lock-down and a new home for the dog. The son kindly recorded a short video about this for *The not Welsh Charity Awards*, which they put on Twitter and Facebook. The daughter nominated Solva Care co-ordinator Lena Dixon for Good Housekeeping's *National treasure* (Dec. 2020 issue).

³ Shalom House is a local hospice offering palliative care.



We helped set up for Christmas lunch in Solva Memorial Hall and organised deliveries of food to people electing to have their lunch at home.

'Just a note to say a very, very big thank you for my Christmas lunch.... It was indeed delightful and good to eat! Please thank all who were involved.'

'Thank you for the wonderful food you delivered to my gran... today. She was very grateful... and she thoroughly enjoyed it.'

Feedback from Mince pie, cake & Christmas card delivery to people we support:

'Many thanks for the mince pie and cake. What a lovely treat'

'Thank you for all your help in 2020'.

A nice surprise! One lovely mince pie & a piece of chocolate cake.....I felt quite overwhelmed by the kind gesture & now I look forward to enjoying eating my very nice surprise at Christmas.

We inspired Manorbier to do their own Advent window trail.

<https://www.westerntelegraph.co.uk/news/18955388.manorbiers-magical-advent-calendar-sparkling-surprise-around-every-corner/>

We contributed to St Davids food hub's Christmas food & treat boxes delivered to 47 households on the St Davids peninsula.

'We are so very grateful for your kind offer to donate goodies and treats for the Xmas boxes... thank everyone at Solva Care for this generosity.'

We invited feedback from the online Writing for Wellbeing sessions via a questionnaire:

I have definitely taken more notice of the detail in the world around me and tried to use words to describe what I see.

I loved the positivity of the sessions, the beautiful poetry and the writing prompts, but what I liked most was seeing smiling faces every Wednesday afternoon.

I felt relaxed and in a good mood afterwards. If I had had a particularly busy day, it made me feel refreshed after.

There being no pressure to share or otherwise contribute meant I could relax and not worry about what I was writing. It was nice to have the space to notice my own reactions to the exercises and poems that you read out and consider them privately.

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. When we were able to, we ran our usual activities and during lock-down we came up with alternatives.

The importance of effective communication between trustees and employees to enable the sharing of documents and specially 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 and invite feedback from 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 one in 2016. We had prepared a third survey but decided to postpone it due to the pandemic.

The research project, funded by Innovate to Save UK concerning Direct Payments was used as an exemplar of research, carried out within a third sector organisation. It was held up as an example of how research could inform the way health and social care services could be delivered 'or not' in the context of a working setting. The example has helped shaped why it could be necessary for NHS research and development to potentially engage in research outside of the health sector. Engaging in collaborative research could help understand the impact and influence of national policy and strategy on health service use and delivery, in bringing health and social care closer to the community.

The importance of working with others

Throughout the Covid 19 pandemic and lock-down we have worked closely with Solva Community Council to co-ordinate information and support in the village. We have also 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 was halted due to Covid-19.

We continue to stay in close contact with the local surgery, holding a drop-in session for two hours every Friday morning. This service has been suspended during Covid, but we look forward to starting up again as soon as possible. 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.

We joined the PCSN (Pembrokeshire Community Support Network) in 2020, to link and network with other communities in the county. In connection with Together for Change, we are working closely with PLANED and PAVS. Although the Cardi Care project has suffered delay, there are signs that this will be back on track in the second half of 2021. In the summer of 2020 trustees, volunteers and staff of Solva Care were interviewed by a PHD student as part of a study to *Explore and compare cases of innovation in the organisation and delivery of social care services*.

Conclusion

Although Solva Care has National Lottery funding until 2023, 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. However, 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. We plan ahead and during early 2021 Trustees held an extra ordinary meeting to review and update the 2019/24 strategy document to take into account both local and national changes and what we have learned from the pandemic. We will shortly be doing another Community Survey in order to keep up to date with changes in our own community. The strategy document will reflect these changes and our response to them.

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 whether there are things they may need to make the present situation easier. We are also resuming some indoor activities and plan more as restrictions ease.

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 local 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.

Advice from Long John Solva Vol. 1

Updated Apr 6

Follow Long John Solva's advice as strictly as he sticks to the Pirate's Code.



STAY 2 CUTLASS LENGTHS APART !