



# Annual Report



**1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025**

## Executive summary

For the second year, this report looks at our attempts to secure ongoing funding to enable continuation of the Charity, following the ending of our National Lottery grant in March 2024. We summarise what we have achieved over the past year, and how we have worked with the community to continue to provide our core activities.

Twenty twenty-four/five was the first year of our Five-Year Strategic Plan (2024-29), in which we set our objectives to achieve the priority areas. These included continuing to deliver and extend our volunteering support 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. The report 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.

We finish by looking to the future for 2025/26, whilst acknowledging the uncertainty faced by the charity. Our 2024/29 strategic plan may be reviewed if longer term funding becomes available. To date we have been successful as a small charity, and we are aware that 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 support services in their own communities.

### *The Search for Funding...*





## Foreword from the Chair

This is our 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Report. As 2024 was the year that our 5-year National Lottery funding ended, the work became dominated by the need to secure ongoing funding.

It continues to be 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 core activities which can benefit local people, whilst we summarise our attempts to ensure that we have sufficient funds to continue with a free service.

Our successes to date are thanks to the enthusiasm and dedication of our volunteers, staff and trustees who have enabled Solva Care to develop new ideas to support wellbeing and becoming an active partner in working with others both locally and across the Peninsula.

Funding is necessary to pay for the hire of premises, activities, volunteer expenses and outings as well as our part time staff who manage the co-ordination and administration of the work. Due to the generosity of donors, fundraising activities and our ability to secure short term funding we can maintain the service until September 2025. Trustees are working hard to seek ways of securing further funding and remain hopeful that one day to be predominantly 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.

We also note that since the last report our role as host to *Together for Change* (TfC), ended as they became a separate Community Interest Company. We intend to continue our close working relationship and to utilise their research findings. The full range of their current projects can be found on their website <https://www.tfcpenbrokeshire.org>

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 work over the period April 2024 to March 2025. This was the first year of our 2024/29 Strategic plan, 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 actions based on the goals we set ourselves for 2024/25. Previous Annual Reports detailing our achievements over each of the past years are available at <https://www.solvacare.co.uk/about-us/>

As we have had a presence in Solva for 10 years we hope that people know who we are and why we exist. However, we have included a summary of both in Appendices 1 for information. 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.

### **The priorities we set for 2024/25 to meet our Strategic Plan 2024/29**

1. 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.
2. Urgently securing ongoing funding to maintain and enhance our services.
3. 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.
4. 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.

### **Our achievements and activities 2024/25 (to meet Priorities 1 & 4 above)**

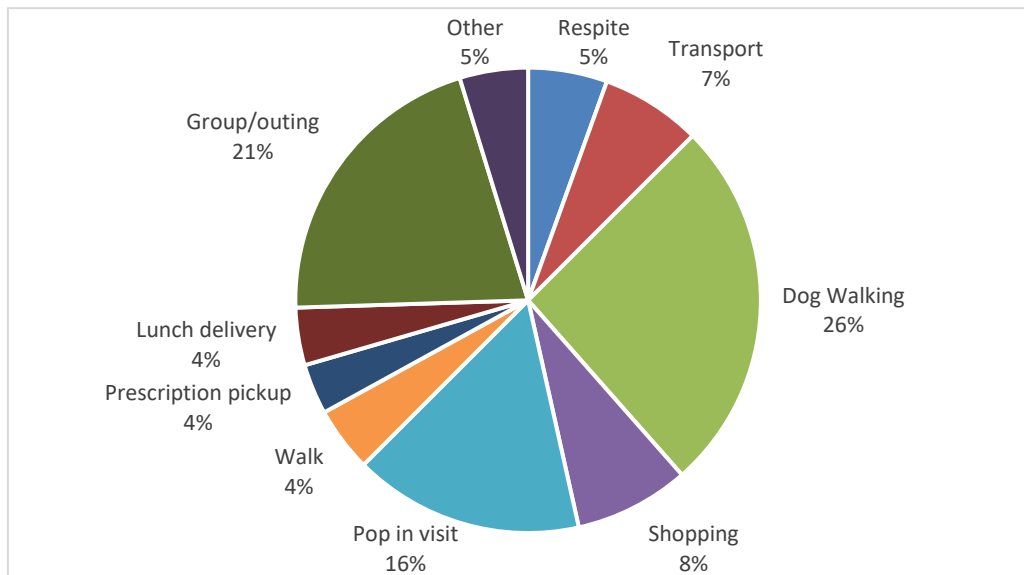
Solva Care have continued to support people in the Parish of Solva and Whitchurch with a variety of things, enabling them to continue living in their own homes and stay part of the community, even if they do not have family nearby. Examples of support included befriending, picking up prescriptions, dog walking, shopping, short respite for those caring for a family member, support to access statutory & other services, signposting and transport to local events, the surgery, optician etc. We

make 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 continues to stay stable, and we currently have more than 40 volunteers giving over 200 hours/month. In the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, volunteers gave 2458 hours of support to about 50 People in and around Solva. Included in this figure is 508 hours spent helping at events organised by us. In addition, trustees spent on average 38 hours/per month to attend and prepare meetings plus administrative duties. Most of the volunteers are retired but there are some who are still working and who help when they can.

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

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



*(Note: 'Other' includes giving technical support, cooking, baking & preparing for events, and helping with projects – e.g., Mouse trail and the Advent windows. Dog walking usually involves the volunteer staying for a cup of tea and a chat.)*

As well as the regular support detailed above, we also helped a person with a PIP (Personal Independence Payment) appeal and Universal Credits. Other support includes accessing hospital transport, assist with arranging outpatient appointments, paying extra bedroom tax to the local council and dealing with utility companies. We provided information about care and support for a family with a relative living with dementia. We also assisted in finding a cleaner for a couple not being quite able to keep on top of household chores anymore.

We helped another resident living on their own to get some practical help at home as well as



keeping his family abroad informed. We advised on temporary care for a relative while the family were away and helped organise bank appointments in Haverfordwest for a person who was not online and found telephone banking difficult. We also helped with applications for benefits and setting up Power of Attorneys.

## Activities & Outings

We run our **Friday Club every Friday afternoon** for two hours in the Solva Football Hub, which is open to all. Up to 21 people (11 on average) attend and almost half of them live outside of Solva. The first half usually consists of seated exercise followed by a quiz, bingo, craft, poetry, a talk etc. mostly provided by local people. The local Ukulele band plays once a month, which is a popular event.

In April 2024 we arranged an **outing to Milford Haven Marina** with lunch for people who do not otherwise get out of the village much. We also organised a salsa evening with refreshments at **Twry Felin in St Davids** for the volunteers, as a thank you for all that they do. There were twenty-two in total, and it was a very enjoyable evening with salsa demonstrations by a local artist/musician.

Solva Care again hosted a **concert by Sinfonia Cymru** in the Memorial Hall in May 2024. This time there were four musicians playing wind instruments. Tickets were free and forty-three people attended. We served refreshments after the concert, for a donation, and we also provided the musicians with a light meal.

The Founder and previous **Chair of Solva Care, Mollie Roach**, was invited to attend a **Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace** on 21 May 2024 and she invited the Co-ordinator to come along. A well deserved recognition of all of Mollie's hard work.

In July we arranged a very pleasant **outing to The Bug Farm (near St Davids)**. Ten of us went to look around the exhibits, attend a bug demonstration and have lunch in the café. Another **visit was to Pembroke Dock Heritage Centre & café** in September 2024. Six people came along and explored the collection and the model of the 'Empire strikes back' spaceship.

In October 2024 we celebrated the **International Day of Older People** with cream tea, cakes & line dancing in the Memorial Hall, an enjoyable and well-attended event.

## Projects

We organised our **Mouse Trail** again in **summer 2024** as an activity for families. We had forty-seven mice dotted around the village and as far as Whitchurch. We displayed a giant mouse along the road by St Elvis Farm on the way into Solva. Mouse maps were available in Bayview Stores, Window on Wales and online with links from our Facebook page. The trail ended on 31 October 2024. We printed one hundred maps and sixty tri-fold leaflets to go with the three information boxes placed around the village.



We also organised **Sparkling Solva** in December 2024 for the 6<sup>th</sup> time. There was an Advent Window for each day in December apart from 1 December, when one road - Brodawel – as usual put on a great display of festive windows. Printed maps were available in Bayview Stores, Window on Wales, the Memorial Hall and the Football Hub and could also be downloaded online.

## 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 Solva residents have decreased. In addition, whenever possible, we support people coming out of hospital which can enable earlier discharges.

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. Another survey is in the pipeline, most likely in cooperation with Solva Community Council.

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.

## 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:

*"Your team are lovely and Friday Club have helped me feel at home here."* (from a Friday Club attendee who has recently moved to the area)

*"Thank you for everything you and your special team have done for mum"* (from the daughter of a parent living with dementia).

*"Thank you for bringing us fun and laughter through the Friday Club. Much appreciated during challenging times"* (from the son of a parent living with dementia).

*"Thank you so much for all your help in getting a lift by (your volunteer) for (my son). It was very short notice"* (a Thank you card from a lady whose son needed to get to a hospital appointment).

*"Thank you... We really really appreciate your help and support." "Thank you again. This really helps"* (from the daughter of a person living with dementia).

## 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. We involve local people in our events, such as Friday Club, to do talks, provide light exercise, craft etc. The local Ukulele band comes to play once a month, and the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park ranger usually comes a couple of times a year to do a talk and a quiz. When we have a special guest speaker we have started to spread the word wider, via posters, emails, social media etc.

We have close contact with Solva Surgery and the Co-ordinator has a room there every Friday morning for people to drop in. 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.

In July 2024 Solva Care had a table at the Edge festival to pilot a joint questionnaire about the Solva Care Expansion Project with St Davids and Llanrhian. About 80 questionnaires were completed by people from all three areas.

Solva Care attended and had a stall at a **Community Event in St Davids City Hall on 22 October 2022** organised by St Davids Community Council, to inform about what we do and our on-going joint Project.

Over the winter, November – March 2024, we organised Warm Rooms – with refreshments and an old film – **in cooperation with Solva Community Council**. They were held in the Football Hub on Tuesday afternoons and 7 people attended regularly.

In January 2025, the Chair and Co-ordinator attended an **Engagement Event** organised by Together for Change – linked to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act – in St Davids City Hall. The Vice-Chair attended the follow-up event later in the month to do a short presentation about Solva Care.

In January 2025 one of our volunteers contacted us about an organisation that she had got involved with called **People Speak Up** and their aim was: *Connecting people and creating healthy, resilient communities through storytelling, spoken word, creative writing, and participatory arts*. We referred three people that we thought would benefit from this and visits are planned for April-May 2025.

One suggestion originating from the volunteer feedback questionnaire was to have another **Dementia Friends session**, which we did in February 2025. All volunteers were invited along with anyone else who was interested. The session was delivered by PAVS and 19 people attended.





Also in February 2025, a freelance journalist contacted us to participate in a program on **BBC Radio 4 – Farming Today** – about people in the community supporting others. One of our Associate Trustees and a person we support agreed to participate and it came over very well.

Solva Care's Co-ordinator assisted Solva Community Council with planning a **Community Information Event** in Solva Memorial Hall, which was held on 23 March 2025. The event was part of the "Warm Rooms Scheme" and various organisations in the area were invited to display their services, including Solva Care.

## **Our actions and achievements to meet priorities 2 & 3**

### **2. Urgently securing ongoing funding to maintain and enhance our services**

Our last annual report highlighted the end of our National Lottery funding grant, and our plans to use reserve funds which would enable us to continue services until September 2024, during which time we hoped to secure an additional grant. The work during 2024/25 has therefore been dominated by grant applications and seeking opportunities to secure funding.

In June 2024 we were successful in being awarded a grant from the Waterloo Foundation which enabled us to continue until March 2025. We were extremely grateful to the Foundation as it provided more time to apply for larger grants.

As the process for large grants from the National Lottery can be lengthy, we considered the option of applying for a smaller amount from the Lottery. However, we continued to pursue the larger grant opportunity as additional time spent on lesser amounts would not offer long term security.

We did however also agree to apply to the Enhancing Pembrokeshire fund together with St Davids and Llanrhian Communities. This would have enabled us to start to develop our plans with the other two communities sooner. Funding however was eventually not made available; hence we continued with the 'People and Places' bid to the Lottery.

Other attempts to raise funds involved a social fundraising event in November 2024, preceded by a tabletop sale in the afternoon. Some Solva Community Council events have also raised funds for Solva Care for which we are grateful.

We continue to gratefully receive donations from the community and introduced the 'Friends of Solva Care' scheme<sup>1</sup> to generate regular funds, and our ongoing pop-up shop continues to earn necessary funds.

By the beginning of 2025 it was obvious that we would not have sufficient funds to maintain our service throughout the Lottery application process. The issue was shared with Hywel Dda Health Board via a Peninsula Stakeholder group. As a result, we are extremely grateful to the Health Board for a grant which will enable us to continue until September 2025.

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<sup>1</sup> People can make regular donations to Solva Care by standing order.

### **3. To extend our reach and share our learning to adjacent communities in the Peninsula, specifically St Davids and Llanrhian.**

We reported last year that to enable us to apply for a large grant we would need to demonstrate the differences between our existing services and how we intended to innovate in the future. We therefore met with St Davids and Llanrhian City/Community Councils to explore how we could extend and amend the model of Solva Care to meet the individual needs of the adjacent communities working with any existing groups.

The idea of the Solva Care Expansion Project was shared with the National Lottery, however the evidence of need across all areas needed to be collected within 3 -6 months of any application. This required the development of a joint community survey which was distributed at local events in each of the areas, alongside presentations in St Davids and Llanrhian.

Analysis of the questionnaires unanimously demonstrated the need and desire for a Solva Care type service which was also supported by local health, community, and social services.

Regular meetings with Councillors and colleagues from St Davids and Llanrhian, have ensured a mutual understanding of the proposal which was shared on numerous occasions with the funding officer from the National Lottery. Following a lengthy pre-application process, we were invited to make Stage 1 of the formal application process which was submitted at the beginning of March 2025. To date, (April 2025) we await their consideration and decision for us to hopefully be invited to progress to stage 2 of the application process.

### **We 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.*



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

We referred last year to the establishment of the Peninsula Stakeholder Board, led by Hywel Dda Health Board. This had followed the departure of the resident GP in Solva and the eventual decision to retain a health service managed practice in Solva. The group had initially been set up to examine long term options for the wider communities in relation to provision of clinical services. In July 2024, the imminent closure of St Davids GP surgery, impacted the development work of this group whose focus became the management of all patients registered with the practice which also impacted on Solva residents. The final decision to re-allocate 90% of the patients from St Davids to the Solva surgery had obvious consequences which needed to be worked through.

Changeover occurred in October 2024 then enabling the Stakeholder group to again focus on future models of care in rural areas. As a result, a Peninsula Working Group was set up with a representative from Solva Care. Their work has since been divided into three sub-groups to focus on clinical services, community and wellbeing and communication. Solva Care has membership of all groups and are recognised as a key part of any future developments.

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

Whilst we have continued our commitment to research and evaluation, our priority has been the development, distribution, and analysis of a 3-way community survey to support the grant application. We have also surveyed our volunteers to find it if they were satisfied with their volunteering and the way the voluntary service is run. Most of them completed and returned the survey and here are some of the comments:

*"Volunteering is a great feeling and improves my feeling of belonging to a strong community."*

*"...being allowed flexibility in volunteering (as with Solva Care) makes it possible to help even if personal commitments are unpredictable."*

*"Being part of a caring community team is good for my wellbeing."*

*"The role of Co-ordinator is crucial..."*

*"it's (my volunteering experience) been very straight forward, always appreciated and followed up."*

Our main research arm, which led to the hosting of *Together for Change* from 2020, continued to diversify and successfully spread the results of their work, achieving large research grants. As a result, it was not appropriate for Solva Care, (facing an uncertain future) to continue to host. Therefore during 2024 *Together for Change* (TfC) began the process of incorporation as a Community Interest Company (CIC) limited by Guarantee and to leave Solva Care in September 2024. Once the CIC had been set up the National Lottery were expecting TfC work to focus on launching a Centre of Excellence, building the Centre's partnership alliance, and developing a business case and funding application by September 2025.

The Lottery had already granted a 10% grant uplift to fund the work which had funded an independent review about the support that was available in Wales for communities, what the gaps were, and what TfCs role could be to fit those gaps. All national organisations and large community groups felt there were gaps that TfC should fill, and forge alliances to ensure better coordination and cooperation across Wales which was currently missing. Solva Care will continue to work with TfC as appropriate, including by contributing and utilising their results. We will draw on their evidence reviews which point to the best practice for coproducing solutions to improving our service to our local community. We also link with TfC 's events to learn and share with other community groups and organisations to learn and share. The link between our organisations continues to be strong as a Trustee of Solva care, Sue Denman, continues to work for TfC .

Solva Care and TfC worked through the formal arrangements required by the Charity Commission which were verified by Cwmpas. This required items on the Solva Care Property Register, purchased by TfC, to be transferred if they still had a monetary value. Items with no value were written off. A new TfC bank account was set-up once the CIC had been registered with Companies House and all monies transferred.

## 6. Ensure effective and efficient management of the Charity

Our Trustee Board remains stable, meeting every 3 months. Where possible terms of office have been extended, however two trustees have now stepped down from the role, leaving two vacancies. Following the first vacancy, advertisements were made locally in the newsletter inviting people from the wider communities to consider working with us. We are also aware of the profile and skill sets of our current group and would like to balance as appropriate. However, no appointments could be made. Following the second vacancy, we have agreed to await the outcome of our grant applications before proceeding.

Trustee Board meetings aim to focus on strategic issues; however, this has been limited due to uncertainty of funds. Our other responsibility is to ensure all our policies and standards are updated and adhered to. This year we revisited our statement of confidentiality and data protection policy along with our safeguarding policy. We regularly discuss communications and have recently updated our website.

Our management group meet regularly to manage and monitor the day-to-day activities and propose new ways of engaging the community. The finance group oversee all the accounting and ensure that all accounts are externally audited, and requirements of the Charity Commission are adhered to.

Our original research and evaluation group has not met as survey work and development of grant applications have involved a wider group of people. Regular evaluation of events has continued.





In September 2024 we held our AGM to highlight our work in the last year and over the last 9 years. Since the community newsletter was extended from Solva to include St Davids we constantly try and keep both communities up to date with any new events and any funding developments.

## **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 hope to use 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 about 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. 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 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 & Founder



Jonathan Higgins  
Trustee



Sandra Young  
Trustee



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

