



south west ross community car scheme

Annual Review 2019-20

Introduction

It has been another busy year in South West Ross with our fantastic volunteers offering support to members of our isolated communities providing transport to get to medical appointments, local transport, dentists, social events and local shops.

The work outlined here is a tribute to their efforts and shows the truly altruistic nature of the communities we live in. We all welcome and acknowledge that there is far more going on behind the scenes than SWRCCS provides, but we celebrate here what we do to make this place a better place to live and to provide access to services and events that some people would otherwise not have.

**Our records show that SWRCCS drivers have travelled a massive 29,206 miles during this year. 8,669 miles were travelled getting to and from our passengers and 20,537 miles were travelled with a passenger in the car getting them to wherever they needed to be.
A huge achievement.**

Volunteers

Our volunteers offer their time, telephones and cars for the benefit of the local community. Over the year SWRCCS has had a group of committed volunteers – 11 telephonists and 27 volunteer drivers. SWRCCS owes them a huge debt of gratitude for what they do in order to keep people moving and getting them to where they need to be. Some drivers only do short runs within their area and others take people to Inverness on a regular basis. Some telephonists do many duties and some do one a month. It all fits in with what they want and need from volunteering, as it should. Our membership has also been developed to ensure that all our volunteers can be kept informed about the work of SWRCCS and feed into its development and progress. It is always good to welcome new volunteers and this year we have welcomed Catriona McCowan, Caroline and Donald Duncan, Sally Cook, Billy Westhead and Teresa Mitchell. We have also had lots of new volunteers responding to Covid-19 and hope that they may continue to be involved as the crisis subsides.

Our particular thanks goes to Alistair McCowan who sadly passed away recently and had stopped volunteering with us this year. Indeed, Alistair was the chair of the Board for many years as well so more about him later!

Users

SWRCCS acts to deliver transport services to our users, old and young, from Achnasheen to Ardaneaskan and from Diabaig to Achintee. Some of them are old, some of them are young but all need to go places and don't have access to transport to be able to go. So SWRCCS is vital for them to get to the doctors, get to local transport for longer journeys, visit friends and family, get to hospital appointments, get to social and community events etc. This ensures that they can maintain both their physical and mental health. Here are a few things that some of them have said:-

"I really appreciate what you do for me"

"I think the service is great"

"I opened this email and smiled!"

What a wonderful job you do at the Community Car Scheme"

Coordinator

In October our Coordinator, Steve Schnabel moved on to valuable work for a maternal health charity that works in Liberia. Richard Munday, the chair of SWRCCS, said in his address to the AGM that the work carried out by Steve had left SWRCCS in very good health. Everyone at SWRCCS wishes him well in his new post and we are also really pleased he remains with us as a volunteer driver.

From December, Peter Fenton started as our new Coordinator and he has been getting to know the organisation and how it works, as well as looking to the future at ways in which SWRCCS could develop.

Governance

The Board have worked hard over the year to ensure that the charity and the company adheres to all the statutory requirements and fulfils the objectives of the organisation laid down in its constitution.

At the April AGM we said goodbye to Alistair McCowan, as chair for a total of 16 years since SWRCCS was set up in 2003, and Roger Evans, as treasurer. Both have been involved for many years both as volunteers and as board members (although happily Roger is still volunteering with us). Our thanks were expressed to them in a lovely meal held at the Walled Garden in Applecross when volunteers and board members alike had the opportunity to say thank you to them both. Alistair sadly passed away in May 2020 after a long illness.

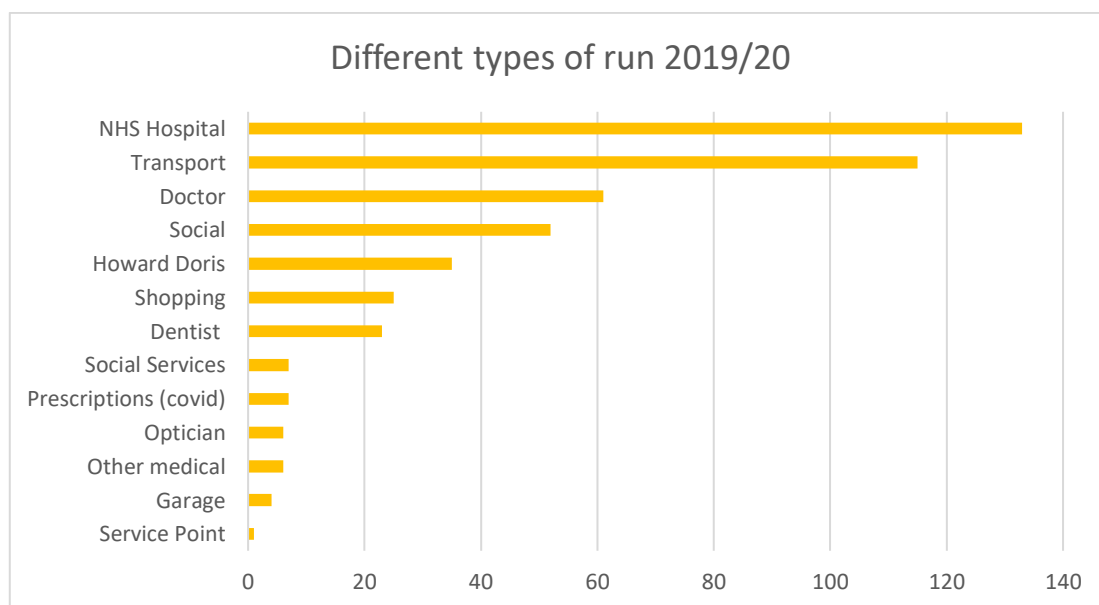
We also welcomed Richard Munday as chair, Tony Lyons and Anne Wood to the Board and look forward to working closely with them.

Car Runs

The car runs table below shows that our volunteers have delivered 429 journeys and our telephonists have organised 475 – an average of nearly 40 every month and in an increase of 5% over the year.

	Organised Regular	Organised Hospital	2019-20 Total	No driver available	Cancelled by passenger	Completed journeys	%age increase runs from 18/19
April	28	10	38	0	1	37	-15.6%
May	28	9	37	0	3	34	-7.5%
Jun	30	9	39	1	0	38	-2.5%
July	33	10	43	1	6	36	16.2%
August	31	11	42	0	1	41	16.7%
September	29	13	42	0	2	40	13.5%
October	38	9	47	0	2	45	9.3%
November	25	13	38	0	4	34	-24.0%
December	20	14	34	1	2	31	36.0%
January	24	17	41	0	6	35	17.1%
February	23	14	37	0	3	34	42.3%
March	27	10	37	1	12	24	0.0%
Year to date	336	139	475	4	41	430	5.3%

And there have been lots of reasons why people needed these journeys but the majority were for vital access to medical facilities. Without SWRCSS many people would have found it much more difficult to access medical care and so the service that is being provided is vital to the health of our communities. Social outings were also important though and these all support the well being of community members.



Funding

Our funding remained secure this year with grants from the Highland Council and NHS. The NHS also continued to fund the expenses incurred for hospital runs and we are grateful to both our funders for their continued support. Indeed, both funders have provided funding for 2020-21 and beyond so SWRCCS remains in a secure financial position.

SWRCCS also recognises that some financial assistance also comes from our users in the payment of fares and donations for which we are very grateful. It just shows how much they value the service our volunteers provide and the support they give the organisation.

Linking in with other organisations

Increasingly the work of SWRCCS is being noticed by others and also SWRCCS has things to learn from other organisations. So, working with other organisations is vital to the growth of SWRCCS and the good relationships we have built with our partners has enabled us to respond much quicker and more effectively to the Covid 19 pandemic. This year we have worked with a number of different organisations including:-

Community Transport Association (Scotland)

Highland Third Sector Interface

Gairloch Community Car Scheme

Ross-shire Voluntary Action

Skye & Lochaber Council for Voluntary Organisations

We have also been delighted to work closely with local community councils, medical practices, Howard Doris Centre and other local organisations. We have developed our membership to include these organisations so that they are included and informed about the work we do and can feed into the organisation. Our strong relationships mean that we can be more responsive and meet the needs of our local communities so much more.

Covid-19

The onslaught of the Covid-19 pandemic has changed everything for everyone. SWRCCS has had to address new needs and challenges and is now delivering prescriptions, supporting communities accessing services and, exceptionally, still taking people to hospital. Just as many of our existing volunteers had to self isolate, 30 new volunteers have offered their services to continue this vital work. The challenges of changing protocols and setting good practice in the delivery of our services has provided challenges and additional burdens on the organisation. But with the commitment of our volunteers SWRCCS is still able to deliver the journeys needed for the well being of the community.

Challenges

Looking ahead, the Board is beginning to look at what a post Covid 19 world may look like. 2020-21 will bring many challenges and changes but we feel that with the organisation as strong as it is, we will be able to continue to meet the needs of the community and deliver appropriate and responsive services to those who need it.