

# Annual Review 2020-21



## Introduction

No-one could have predicted the year that we have had; the development of the Covid-19 pandemic, the effect on our communities, our livelihoods, the services we rely on and the connections between us all. It has been a year when everything has been unprecedented and SWRCCS has had to change, adapt and develop in order to react and respond to the needs that faced members of our communities, as well as changing the way we did things to ensure that all our volunteers, users and members of the community stay as safe as possible. So, this annual review reflects this and will continue to talk about changes but at the same time looking forward to developing our services in order to meet real social needs and to overcome the problems of isolation, particularly for people without access to transport.

As always, the amazing efforts of our volunteers as drivers, telephonists and trustees have enabled us to steer through the year. The support from the people using the services and from local surgeries and other organisations to assist in the development of new services has been strengthening. The continued flexibility and maintenance of our funding has also been invaluable in allowing us to adapt and improvise as we went along. A huge 'thank you' to you all.

**Our records show that SWRCCS drivers have travelled a massive 15,154 miles during this year of which 8,303 miles were travelled with a passenger in the car getting them to wherever they needed to be. 1,647 prescriptions have been delivered and 126 other deliveries made to doorsteps throughout our area.**

**A huge achievement particularly in the year that we have had.**

## Volunteers

Our volunteers offer their time, telephones and cars for the benefit of the local community. As the lockdown struck many people came forward as volunteer drivers for the duration and we have been very fortunate in maintaining some of them even as the lockdown eased and they started back at work. Some drivers have agreed to deliver prescriptions and other deliveries, some are able to do short passenger runs within our area and a few are able to do longer passenger runs to hospital and medical appointments outwith the area. SWRCCS now has a total of 44 volunteer drivers and 12 telephonists. We sadly said goodbye to Anne Maxwell as a driver, she has been an active driver for many, many years. Fortunately, Anne is staying on as a telephonist and valued member of the board of trustees.

Our telephonists have also been giving some users and other residents regular calls to check in on them. The beneficiaries of these calls have very much appreciated hearing a kindly voice and the

opportunity to chat and catch up. The calls have also identified needs from people that our telephonists were able to help with including shopping, contacts with others and getting to vital medical appointments.

## Users

During the lockdown there has been less need for some journeys as there were no social events and many hospitals focussed on responding to covid cases. Hesitancy to use public transport has also increased the demand to get to vital medical appointments. During the year SWRCCS has taken people to medical appointments including hospital runs and runs to vaccine clinics. Users of SWRCCS have also benefitted from contact with our telephonists giving them the knowledge that they are supported within the community and with little other social contact, the telephone calls have been a vital link with the outside world. Here are a few things that some of them have said:-

*“I feel a lot less stress knowing I will be able to get to my appointments.”*

*“Can’t say how much the calls are appreciated from the lovely person on the phone.”*

*“Thanks so much for everything you all do.”*

*“Had to polish my halo this morning as I was told how much the car scheme was appreciated. Fulsome praise.” (this from a telephonist)*

## Car Runs

With government guidance in force people were largely staying at home and sharing car journeys was only to be done under essential circumstances. So, early in the year SWRCCS reluctantly decided to only undertake medical journeys – to hospital, local surgeries, dentists, opticians and so on. No other passenger runs have been undertaken.

Also, in line with good practice guidelines during the pandemic, protocols were put in place on the use of PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) including masks, gloves, driver shields, use of sanitiser and so on. Support and materials on cleaning the cars and the way in which deliveries should take place were also quickly introduced and have been used as a model by other car schemes and organisations. It is envisaged that these protocols will continue well into the future as they have become generic good practice.

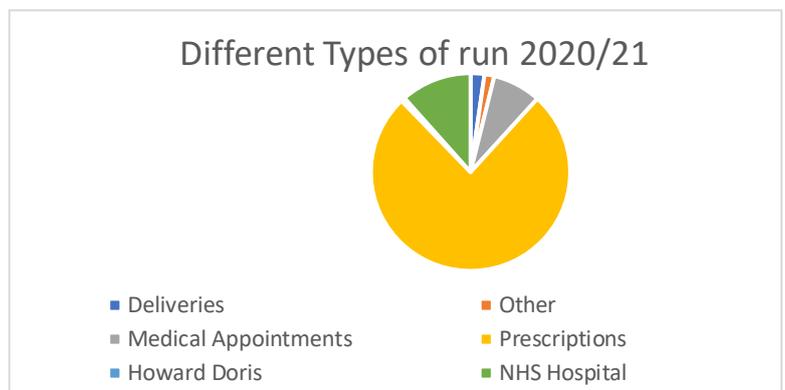
Another big change was to deliver prescriptions on behalf of the local medical practices. This not only means that patients do not have to go out of their homes to pick up their medicines but the footfall at the local medical practices is reduced. It has been a hugely valued activity by all concerned and we want to continue into the future.

The car runs table below shows that our volunteers have delivered 587 journeys and our telephonists have organised 618 – an average of nearly 50 every month and in an increase of 30.1% over the year.

## 2020/21

	Organised Regular	Organised Hospital	Total	No of deliveries	No driver available	Cancelled by passenger	Completed journeys	%age increase organised runs
April	45	2	47	115	0	10	37	23.7%
May	51	4	55	147	0	3	52	48.6%
Jun	40	5	45	152	0	0	45	15.4%
July	43	4	47	169	0	2	45	9.3%
August	41	3	44	104	0	0	44	4.8%
September	43	8	51	134	1	2	48	21.4%
October	44	5	49	134	0	1	48	4.3%
November	39	7	46	153	0	2	44	21.1%
December	46	4	50	113	0	2	49	47.1%
January	48	10	58	135	0	4	54	41.5%
February	46	9	55	179	0	1	54	48.6%
March	60	11	71	191	0	4	67	91.9%
<b>Year to date</b>	<b>546</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>618</b>	<b>1773</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>587</b>	<b>30.1%</b>

You can see from the chart opposite that the vast majority of runs this year has been for the delivery of prescriptions but there has also been an increasing demand for hospital runs and attendance at medical surgeries for appointments including vaccines. All this in an environment where SWRCCS is only doing runs with a medical need.



## Coordinator

We have been very fortunate to have enlisted the support of Mat Webster who is now covering the office functions when Peter Fenton, our coordinator, is on holiday. Now the office can function all through the year without relying on trustees or other volunteers covering the office functions.

## 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. Keeping on top of the latest government guidance and what is possible and not possible for SWRCCS activities and supporting the volunteers to be able to fulfil their duties has

been paramount to the activities of the board. A small group also looked at developing a Code of Conduct, Safeguarding Policies and procedures for raising a complaint. A huge amount of work which should ensure that the organisation continues to function effectively, with high standards and an open culture.

At the October AGM we said goodbye to Eunice Cameron as a trustee. Eunice was involved in the setting up of SWRCCS in 2003 and so has been involved for many years and seen the car scheme through numerous developments and changes. Although she will be missed from the board, she remains as a telephonists for which we are hugely grateful.

Over the year we advertised for new trustees to try and strengthen the resilience of the board of trustees for the longer term. We are looking forward to welcoming some new members to the board and working with them in the future.

## Funding

SWRCCS continues to be supported by our core funders the Highland Council and NHS Highland. There has been huge flexibility shown as we adapted to the new situation so that we were able to fulfil car runs outside our normal remit. The cessation of local services such as optician outreach and decreased dental services meant that members of our communities need to travel outwith the area and we were able to meet this demand and continue to do so.

Additional funding was also secured from Highland & Island Enterprise through Torridon & Kinlochewe Community Council as well as a Discretionary Grant through the local office of the Highland Council. This valuable additional funding was used to supply PPE to our drivers including driver shields and anti bacterial fogger sprays. We were very grateful for these additional funds enabling us to develop our service safely within the pandemic.

## Linking in with other organisations

With the pandemic, working with other organisation has become even more important; sharing good practice, sharing responses and solutions to different scenarios and listening to people about their needs and ways in which we can support our communities. This year we have worked with a number of different organisations including:-

Community Transport Association (Scotland)

Gairloch Community Car Scheme

Skye & Lochaber Council for Voluntary Organisations

Highland Third Sector Interface

Volunteer Scotland

We have also been fortunate to have strong and growing relationships with local community councils, medical practices, Howard Doris Centre and other local organisations – including Covid 19 response groups. Central to this has been developing prescription runs, user calls, access to PPE for volunteers and so on. Our strong relationships mean that we can be more responsive and meet the needs of our local communities so much more appropriately and respond quickly to local needs.

# Challenges

So, as the year ahead looms with some degree of uncertainty, we continue to do everything we can to ensure that SWRCCS and its amazing volunteers will be here, responding to local needs and ensuring that local residents can get to the places they need to get to. The hope is that we can deliver more than just medical trips when it is safe and prudent to do so, that we can get together and celebrate seeing each other – and celebrate our 'Local Hero' award recently received from Torridon & Kinlochewe Community Council! As always if you have any suggestions for us, would like to get more involved or just want to say hello, then do get in touch.