

# Annual Review 2021-22



## Introduction

Another year of uncertainty was experienced by all of our communities with the relaxing of restrictions and the re-introduction of restrictions; the changing needs and responses leaving many feeling vulnerable or still unsure about things. All this affected the services provided by SWRCCS in how people wanted to engage with volunteering activities and the types of car runs that people felt comfortable, or not, undertaking. It also affected users of the service in how people felt comfortable or not taking public transport, accessing medical appointments and socialising. It certainly feels like a long time now since community events have taken place, not to mention volunteer socials! The residents in this remote area continue to have difficulties accessing a number of services such as opticians and those that previously provided outreach to the area, some of which have currently not been resumed.

Despite all of this, SWRCCS continues to get people to places they need to go for medical and essential purposes such as visiting elderly relatives in care homes. The number of longer runs to access services not provided in the area such as hospitals and opticians continues. What's more we sincerely hope that in 2022 we will be able to resume social runs safely and the board is keeping a close eye on the situation to be able to do this at the soonest opportunity.

The commitment and dedication of our volunteers, as drivers, telephonists and board members has enabled us to continue to provide this essential service to our communities. Giving time, the use of their cars or telephones, donating and sharing a friendly conversation and smile all make SWRCCS' work hugely valued in the community. Long may it continue! A big 'thank you' to you all.

The work of the volunteers was also recognised by a Commendation from the Lord Lieutenant's office and a Local Hero award from Torridon & Kinlochewe Community Council. We are very grateful for this recognition and hope to have the chance to celebrate with all our volunteers soon.

**Our records show that SWRCCS drivers have travelled a massive 21,790 miles during this year of which 13,970 miles were travelled with a passenger in the car getting them to wherever they needed to be. 1575 prescriptions have been delivered and 167 other deliveries made to doorsteps throughout our area.**

**A massive achievement.**

## Volunteers

Our volunteers offer their time, telephones and cars for the benefit of the local community. This year we have managed to recruit 3 new volunteers who have offered their services as drivers. We

have also been successful in retaining most of our other volunteers as they continue to value getting out into the community delivering prescriptions and getting people to medical appointments. The journey is always a good chance to catch up with people, get to know them better and strengthen connections within the communities. On one occasion a driver took a patient to Aberdeen for an appointment, a 9 hour round trip and his partner even provided soup for the journey! SWRCCS now has a total of 42 volunteer drivers and 12 telephonists.

Our telephonists have also been giving regular calls to many users and other residents to check in on them. The recipients 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 other services and getting to vital medical appointments. All this and arranging drivers for the various runs that are undertaken. Here's some things the volunteers have said:

*"I've thoroughly enjoyed meeting people from the village and surroundings. It's given me a real insight into the different situations people are in," a Lochcarron volunteer*  
*"It's a brilliant service" a Torridon volunteer*

## Users

Many of our users are elderly and living alone so getting their prescriptions delivered to their door or accessing medical appointments with the opportunity to have a chat on the way, all helps individuals to stay independent and live within the community which they call home. Even getting a call occasionally to see how they are enables them to share concerns or any needs they have. Often just knowing that SWRCCS is there if they need it can relieve stress and anxiety as they know they can get to appointments when needed. Here are a few things that some of them have said:-

*"XX was so grateful for getting her to her appointment last week" the Lochcarron Medical Practice*  
*"Thanks for all your help this year" (on a Xmas card) a resident of Balnacra*  
*"I don't know how I would get to the appointments without you."*  
*"It's a special thing" a resident of Lochcarron*

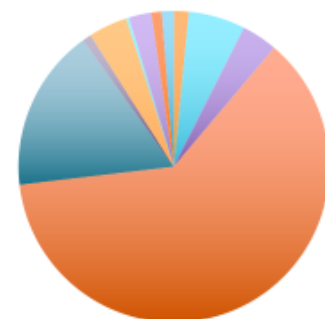
## Car Runs

SWRCCS drivers have continued to deliver prescriptions and get people to medical appointments at local medical practices, hospitals, optician, dentists, audiologists and the list goes on. Although some are relatively local (about a 15 mile round trip), many involve journeys of 120 plus miles to get to hospital appointments and to access other services. We hope that we can resume social runs in 2022 but at the time of writing we are still only undertaking car runs for medical or essential purposes such as visiting elderly relatives in care homes or journeys that clearly support people in maintaining good mental health and reducing isolation.

The car runs table shows that our volunteers have delivered 620 journeys and our telephonists have organised 645 – an average of nearly 54 every month and an increase of 4.4% over the year.

2021/22									
	Organised Regular	Organised Hospital	Delivery Runs	Total	No of deliveries	No driver available	Cancelled by passenger	Completed journeys	%age increase organised runs
April	10	14	41	65	189	0	3	62	38.3%
May	9	7	41	57	182	1	0	56	3.6%
Jun	10	8	45	63	219	0	0	63	40.0%
July	8	8	41	57	127	0	5	52	21.3%
August	9	5	39	53	116	0	1	52	20.5%
September	12	8	37	57	90	0	3	54	11.8%
October	20	9	31	60	116	0	3	57	22.4%
November	9	9	30	48	118	0	1	47	4.3%
December	4	8	19	31	113	0	1	30	-38.0%
January	6	12	27	45	91	0	1	44	-22.4%
February	11	11	29	51	178	1	3	47	-7.3%
March	9	13	36	58	127	0	2	56	-18.3%
<b>Year to date</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>416</b>	<b>645</b>	<b>1666</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>620</b>	<b>4.4%</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 vaccinations. All this in an environment where SWRCCS is only doing runs with a medical need.



- Dentist
- Doctor
- Lunchclub
- Prescription Delivery
- Hospital
- Optician
- Public Transport
- Social Services
- Vaccine
- Other Medical
- Other

## Coordinator

Peter Fenton continues to work supporting volunteers and managing the organisation, funding and finances. After working from home for the past couple of years, he is trying to work more from the office in Loch Torridon Community Centre and hopes to get out and about a bit more to meet existing volunteer and users, and recruit a few more! Peter also liaises closely with partners such as local medical practices, community councils and other organisations to ensure that SWRCCS is connected with new initiatives, listening to local needs and identifying how SWRCCS can be involved.

## 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. In order to develop the organisation they are looking to become a SCIO (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation) which will involve developing a new constitution and new reporting systems to OSCR and will simplify the structure of the organisation.

At the AGM in November 2021 we said goodbye to Tony Lyon as a trustee. Tony has been involved for many years and acted as a valued volunteer driver throughout his time with the organisation. We wish him well. We also welcomed Mary Peart and Laura Reid as trustees after they had been co-opted during the year. We look forward to working with them and benefitting from the skills and experience they bring to the board.

Members also thanked Rosie Arthur for her time as secretary as she stepped down from that role after many years supporting the administration of the board. Although she will be missed from the role, she remains as a telephonist, driver and board member for which we are hugely grateful. Anne Wood has taken on the role of secretary and we welcome her into the role.

## Funding

SWRCCS continues to be supported by our core funders, the Highland Council and NHS Highland. SWRCCS was pleased to have secured 3 year funding from NHS Highland at an increased rate so that we can continue to support and develop transport to medical services.

Additional funding was also secured from NHS Highland through Lochcarron Medical Practice to support the delivery of prescriptions in the area. Thanks to all the Lochcarron Medical staff that enabled this support.

There has also been an increase in donations which have come from users of the scheme, drivers and from other sources such as a legacy from Alastair McCowan – our Chair for many years, Applecross Lunch Club and the sale of the famous tea towels!

## Linking in with other organisations

SWRCCS continues to value working closely with other organisation; 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, the Howard Doris Centre and other local organisations – including Covid-19 response groups. Our strong relationships mean that we can be more responsive and meet the needs of our local communities appropriately and respond quickly to local needs.

## Challenges

In addition to the continuing health uncertainties, SWRCCS is now dealing with other concerns including the cost of living and petrol price increases which may affect the ability of volunteers to offer their services and so affect volunteer retention and recruitment.

As SWRCCS transitions to becoming a SCIO, looking at our constitution – re-drafting, updating and ensuring that it is an active living document that reflects the true nature of the car scheme remains a central and core piece of work for the year.

Finally, as always, the challenge to support both volunteers and users to access the services they need, and to continue to provide opportunities to strengthen connections and links within the communities we serve, through providing much needed transport in this beautiful, but remote part of the country.