



## HAMNAVOE CARERS – STROMNESS

### Chair Annual Report 2019

This was a busy and exciting year for the Hamnavoe Carers. The regular Tuesday, Thursday and Friday shopping trips were supplied by our faithful drivers and the whist drives continued to raise money and offer a monthly social event.

We spent a lot of 2018 raising funds with the intention of purchasing a new minibus. The previous one was over ten years old, beginning to look its years and we were concerned that it was going to start costing more and more in maintenance and upkeep. We reached our financial goal and our lovely new Renault Master minibus was delivered home in March.

We were very lucky that Courtside Conversions who installed the disabled access lift and all the other accessories that we needed (and who are based in Devon!) delivered the bus to the Northlink Terminal in Aberdeen where it was transported without cost by ferry to Kirkwall. Deepest thanks are due to the suppliers and to Northlink, for their organisation and generosity.

Such an occasion could not go unacknowledged and, in April, we were delighted to host a launch event in the Eventide Club at the Pierhead when, over tea and cake, members, committee members and interested folk (including staff from the Co-op, Kris Bevan of Northlink and a photographer from *The Orcadian*) were able to inspect the new vehicle and applaud as Agnes Clouston cut the ribbon and inaugurated the new service.

In the summer, Lesley Clouston, our indefatigable Transport Convener, organised five different trips for members - and she drove on four of them! These included mystery tours, the Dounby Show, Hoy and Westray. It was only due to Lesley's efforts that the tours were so varied and diverse but I don't think we should expect this standard every year – it's just too much to ask of one person!

Although the expense of the new bus has been met, fundraising continues. After a delay following our application, Tesco's Bags of Help yielded the tidy sum of £1000 in July and a welcome boost to our coffers. The sale of the old minibus yielded around £3000 and Stockan's Oatcakes held a fundraiser which gave us a cheque for £250 plus a bumper haul of products which boosted our Christmas raffle prizes.

The Christmas dinner was held again in the Golf Club, on the premise that 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it!' Sure enough, it was a great success thanks to the efforts of Jean Gatt, the Kirk Belles, the members and the hard-working committee.

Despite a successful year, challenges still lie ahead. As St. Peter's care home closes and moves location, the minibus garage will lie isolated until a new purpose for the St. Peter's building is decided. It needs some renovation and that will be a task to tackle in 2020. Also, as St. Peter's was caretaker of the minibus keys, a new system will need to be found for this.

Hamnavoe Carers will always need to recruit new drivers and, although we welcomed one this year, others have had to take a step back. Our capacity to offer our services and to consider expanding what we do depends on our drivers and we are extremely lucky in the quality of those who presently serve us. If you can think of anyone else we can approach, please say.

Members are our *raison d'être*. Without folk there is no Hamnavoe Carers. This year, we will be considering ways of raising our profile and bringing more people on board our new bus!

I should also add that without a committee, there is also no Hamnavoe Carers. Thanks are again due to a cheerful, willing and creative group of folk without whom I would not be writing this!

**Sally Bartkowiak**

Chair

January 2020