



Annual Review
April 2008 - March 2009

Carers Link East Dunbartonshire Annual Review, April 2008 - March 2009

Welcome to the Fifth Annual Review of Carers Link East Dunbartonshire, which celebrates all we have achieved over our first 5 years.

Please note that throughout these pages, the names of some Carers featured have been changed to protect their identity.

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OUR VISION

Carers want to see the person they care for have the best possible quality of life.

Carers Link wants to see the Carers of East Dunbartonshire also have the best possible quality of life.

This quality of life encompasses help and support for their caring role, and the opportunity to pursue their own needs, interests or work.

Carers Link wants to see that the Carers of East Dunbartonshire are informed and involved.

Carers Link wants to see that the Carers of East Dunbartonshire are respected and valued.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Three years ago when I first became involved with Carers Link it was because Jennifer mentioned that they were looking for occasional volunteer drivers. Little did I know that this would escalate into doing admin in the office, coming onto the Board, being involved in a sub-group and this year being 'last man standing' when they were looking for a Chairperson, an honour and privilege to take on.

Carers Link opened for business on 2nd August 2004 and since that time has grown in a quite remarkable fashion. It has gone from 4 staff members to 11, from 2 small offices to the spacious accommodation we now have, and through successful recruitment drives we have involved over 50 Volunteers.

For our 5th birthday we are celebrating all our achievements and noting in particular 5 landmark events:

- Our official launch on 28th January 2005
- The launch of the Carers Strategy on Carers Rights Day, December 2006
- The start of our specialist services with the addition of a Support Co-ordinator for Carers in Mental Health at the end of 2007
- A major funding crisis and the saving of Carers Call by East Dunbartonshire Council in early 2008

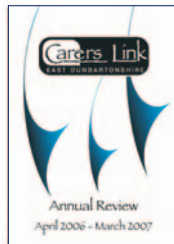
- The start of the Caring with Confidence events early in 2009 following funding from East Dunbartonshire Community Health Partnership

The new financial year has already started with further expansion, as we have secured funding from the Big Lottery for an Older Carers Peer Support Co-ordinator starting in Autumn 2009.

The success of Carers Link is a testimony to the dedication and hard work of the staff, all of whom go above and beyond the call of duty to ensure the smooth running of the organisation and I thank them for providing me with their invaluable support, enabling me to carry out my duties as Chairperson. I would also like to thank the many Volunteers who make a huge contribution to our work, my fellow Board Members (past and present) and of course our funders, East Dunbartonshire Council and East Dunbartonshire Community Health Partnership without whom we would not exist.

There will, as always, be challenges ahead, but with such a dedicated team I have every confidence that Carers Link will continue to thrive and provide the much needed support to the Carers of East Dunbartonshire.

Julia Campbell
Chairperson



SUPPORTING

Carers deserve the same life chances that other people enjoy - good health, financial security, the right to a family life, opportunities to work and pursue their own interests. But the reality for those who provide regular help and support to a partner, relative, friend or neighbour because they cannot manage without help is vastly different.



Our Support Co-ordinators, Paul and Fiona, experience daily the sense of relief that Carers get through simply speaking with someone who listens impartially to how they are feeling. The emotional support provided by support staff and by Carers Call Volunteers is an integral part of what Carers Link is actually about, because before receiving help with accessing advocacy and services or going along to Carer groups, many Carers need emotional support first and foremost.

“The person you know has changed, which is very hard to deal with, the fact that they can be a different person from day to day is difficult, speaking to someone who can relate in some way really helps, even if it is just understanding how you feel”

During research carried out by Carers Link with the help of Volunteers and Carers in 2008, an amazing 89% replied that talking to someone with caring experience was beneficial with a firm 'Yes' or even a resounding 'Very Much So'. Reasons given for such a positive response ranged from being able to *“share experiences and learn from each other”* to *“can moan without feeling guilty”*.

The Report also revealed that accessing the information and support that Carers need is not always straightforward and often involves being passed from 'pillar to post' ultimately leading to not only a delay in the Carer receiving the help they need but also feelings of frustration, anger or exhaustion. Even knowing your rights as a Carer does not necessarily mean getting what you are entitled to without 'jumping through hoops'.

“Dealing with professionals and their paperwork is harder than dealing with my mother, who has advanced Alzheimer's”

Carers often feel stuck in situations where their wishes are not taken into account, whether this be a Parent Carer dealing with their child's school, or perhaps a Carer trying to ascertain what services will be put in place before their husband or wife is discharged

from hospital. Carers Link provides a confidential advocacy service which can support Carers to express their views and feelings about their situation - and just feeling supported can make a huge difference.

“ At this point a friend told me about Carers Link. This was a godsend. For once someone was prepared to listen with a sympathetic ear and take into account the complex problems we faced. Over a few phone calls, we got to know Paul and he got to know us, and from then on things started happen. Paul got the correct forms I needed and thankfully helped us to fill them in. Carers Link acted as an advocate for us. He was able to put forward our needs that should have been taken into account but were not ”

However even after the initial advocacy input or when a Carer's circumstances change, Carers Link continues to provide support.

“ Carers Link were a great emotional support to us during this time, which allowed us to get the help we needed (when she went into a care home)...Knowing they were only a phone call away gave me great peace of mind. Someone was always there for me when I was struggling, and they took on the responsibility for me ”

Advocacy can also make a real change to someone's life...

Ann first contacted Carers Link on 8th November 2004. Whilst continuing to work full-time, she cared for her husband who has both medical conditions and addictions.

Following advocacy input from Sharon, Ann and her husband were awarded 4 hours sitter service each week and additional benefits including higher rate Disability Living Allowance.

Five years later, Ann remains in contact with Carers Link and the initial advocacy has resulted in 2000 sitter hours and approximately £25,000 in benefits over this time.



In 2008-2009, staff provided support and advocacy to 230 new Carers previously unknown to the organisation. In addition, 471 Carers already in contact with Carers Link by the start of the financial year continued to receive ongoing information, support and advocacy.

INVOLVING

Since Carers Link began, Volunteers have:

- Distributed 11740 leaflets and posters
- Stuffed more than 9736 envelopes
- Made 3821 calls to Carers
- Had 274 visits with Carers
- **Donated 9077 hours in total worth £97,759.29**



The importance of our Volunteers cannot be overstated in terms not only of the huge amount of work that they do with us, but also of the goodwill and wisdom that they bring to the organisation. We thank each and every one who has volunteered over the years - far too many to mention by name!

Through Carers Call on the phone, and in person over a coffee, Volunteers speak one to one with Carers and provide the essential 'listening ear' which can often be missing in a Carer's day. Whether meeting to provide support at particularly stressful times or ongoing over the years - or even never meeting at all - some strong friendships have developed.

“...really appreciate the support that Carers Link have provided and continue to provide... (Carers Call) is a fantastic service, and one that I would never have known existed”

In addition to direct support, Volunteers help with a wide variety of things including researching and collating information and statistics, and raising awareness through leaflet distribution and attending events or meetings. As with any busy office we always need help in all other areas of our work and a call for 'all hands on deck' to get a large mailshot out on a deadline never goes unanswered.

Many people may not realise that the support provided by Volunteer Directors on our Board of Management is just as important as those directly involved in providing support. Indeed without Volunteer Directors, there could be no charities!

We always welcome hearing from people who are interested in joining our Board, ensuring Carers Link is run efficiently and properly, that our funds are spent properly, and to make sure that as we grow, Carers Link continues to meet the needs of Carers in East Dunbartonshire.

“Carers Link were looking for a new Treasurer and it was suggested this might be an appropriate position for me. Being born and brought up in Milngavie, volunteering for Carers Link, which is very much a local charity, seemed the ideal choice. Ensuring Carers have help and support is so important to me.”

5 years of donated hours

- Esther - 400 hours
- Jan - 329 hours
- Jenny - 245 hours
- Nuala - 175 hours
- Jon - 1450 hours

Our First Volunteers - Where are they Now?

Heather came to volunteer whilst a student, gaining experience and confidence and now works for a large charity providing support to individuals with disabilities.



On retirement and still wanting to make a difference, Esther wanted to provide support to Carers through befriending. Nearly 5 years on, she still provides support to the same lady, going for coffee, wandering round the shops and of course chat. *"What's so rewarding for me is how much she appreciates being out and about."* Esther now also provides support to a second Carer who really appreciates being able to chat about her caring situation to someone outwith her family.

Jan had never volunteered before, though having provided care for a family member knew the strain this can cause. Jan has provided support to the same Carer for over 4 years; as the Carer also has a disability, she thinks that Jan is fantastic describing her as *"the only person I have a really good laugh with."* However Jan feels that she gets *"just as much back from volunteering"* and meets *"so many good people."*

Jon says that he came to Carers Link whilst recovering from mental health difficulties. He wanted to regain self-confidence and at the same time to do something to help others. Through volunteering, Jon saw a major change in his health and rediscovered his zest for life. In October 2008 Jon applied for his first job in 9 years and got it thanks to his volunteering experience.

Jenny has volunteered in many different roles including befriending, helping at events, driving and fundraising. In addition to donating her time, she has 'donated' her image, being photographed for Carers Link leaflets and posters! Jenny continues to volunteer with Carers Link, helping out as and when we need her and now also volunteers with a large voluntary organisation.

10 Reasons Volunteers continue with Carers Link:

- I enjoy giving time talking to and supporting Carers
- It keeps me busy and out of trouble
- It gives me a feeling of self worth, and of confidence being in a working environment
- I have built up a relationship not only with Carers, but with staff who are so welcoming and supportive, the whole experience makes it worthwhile
- It continues to give me pleasure to brighten someone's day
- The good atmosphere in the office amongst the staff, and for the experience of working with these people; and the good reputation that Carers Link has with Carers
- To volunteer in a friendly environment and because there is no other organisation like this one
- It's good to feel I've made a difference
- I can clearly see the benefits in what Carers Link is doing
- Feeling of being of some help to others (and) feeling of being appreciated by staff

Carers Link was awarded funding by East Dunbartonshire Community Health Partnership in Autumn 2008 to provide information courses and sessions for Carers. By November Jon Berry and Norman Williamson were in post, devising a rolling programme for Carers and aiming to provide



information and courses and to raise awareness about all aspects of what it means to be a Carer. Jon and Norman also visited other Carer Centres, talked with Carers Scotland and the local Community Health Partnership, and importantly consulted with local Carers.

Five training needs identified in the consultation report:

- ➊ Directing to information and help available
- ➋ Help with Stress Management and Confidence Building
- ➌ Help with legal aspects such as Power of Attorney
- ➍ Specific training on First Aid and Moving & Handling
- ➎ Information about Services



“Caring with Confidence” began in East Dunbartonshire, and within a matter of days a series of First Aid sessions was fully booked up. Feedback showed that the course met a real need, with Carers learning new skills for their day to day caring role.

“*Thoroughly enjoyed the day, learned a lot and have much more confidence in my abilities*”

A wide-ranging programme is being devised covering subjects such as Changing Relationships, Stress Management, Money Matters and Looking After Yourself. A course about Moving and Handling Awareness is planned, and Carers will also be able to join in Group Relaxation.

Within the first 6 months, **109 Carers** have benefited from participation in Caring With Confidence activities. Jon and Norman (recently joined by Fiona) have a very busy year ahead as it is hoped that “Caring with Confidence” sessions will be delivered at various locations throughout East Dunbartonshire to ensure that as many Carers as possible have the opportunity to attend.

“*Well done and thank you. This is very important for all Carers*”

“*Very good experience. Lovely people on the course. Learned a lot of techniques*”

“*A great help to me. Confirmed to me and the others that our feelings are normal*”

“*Very helpful and so 'de-stressful' to be able to discuss the issues*”

“*These 'Boys' do a grand job!*”

Caring can lead to significant stress and anxiety, and motivated by this, Helen - a qualified and experienced holistic practitioner - volunteered to conduct a pilot on the possible benefits of holistic therapies such as aromatherapy massage, reflexology and Reiki.

Following a very positive evaluation, Helen and Carers Link now have a programme of individual therapies (thanks to funding from East Dunbartonshire Council Choose Life Strategy) and group relaxation sessions that teach techniques to do at home (thanks to funding from East Dunbartonshire Community Health Partnership). Demand for both individual and group sessions is proving to be high! Carers Link thanks Helen for her time, expertise and empathy because, in this case, it really couldn't happen without her.

"The therapy has allowed me to be more relaxed and calm, as opposed to agitated and worried"

"It gives time to relax and reflect on the areas of my caring role that may be problematic; releasing the tension helps a Carer see things in a clearer way"

"It's made me think about having time for myself"

"I could just have lain there all day"

At our AGM in November 2008, we launched 2 new leaflets for Carers - **Looking After Yourself** and **Do You Support Someone with Poor Mental Health?**

With our new leaflet for Carers looking after someone with a drug, alcohol or gambling problem, we are well on our way to completing our range of Information Resources. Our planned re-launch of the website has taken longer than planned; however we are confident that it will be worth the wait!

The first edition of our new 'What's On' bulletin was sent out at the end of March to all Carers on our mailing list. We are planning 5 editions each year, which will include details of "Caring with Confidence" sessions and courses, as well as information about our Carer Groups and about relevant external events and courses.



Top 5 Subjects of Enquiry between April 2008-March 2009

- Services • Benefits • Home Support • Carer Groups • Respite

How Carers heard about us between April 2008-March 2009

- Carers Link Publicity 29%
- Health Referrals 19%
- Social Work Referrals 13%
- Voluntary Organisation Referrals 22%
- Word of Mouth 17%

GROUPS

5 Blether Groups:

De Café

Men's Group

Blether on a Friday

Parents Group

Mental Health Carers

5 most popular treats as voted by Carers Link Staff & Volunteers:

Caramel wafers

Carrot cake

Chocolate biscuits (from a
well-known store!)

Millionaire shortbread

Anything with chocolate!

Carer Groups are now an integral part of Carers Link. Each has evolved over the last 5 years in response to the needs of Carers who wanted to come together with others who have a caring role, and it is envisaged that more groups will develop as we go along. Each group has a unique identity, with some bringing Carers together to talk about issues specific to their caring experiences and to receive input from professionals, while others offer a break from caring with activities and the opportunity to simply chat over coffee (& cake - a Carers Link staple!)



Carers attending the groups have....

Kicked footballs at Hampden..... played Crazy Golf..... visited The People's Palace..... experienced Relaxation Therapy..... received benefits advice from Citizens Advice Bureau..... had social nights in The Torrance Inn..... heard from speakers from PAMIS, Sense, EDAMH, East Dunbartonshire Social Work and from both the Community and Primary Care Mental Health Teams..... learned how to make soup and (healthy) burgers..... drunk more than 600 cups of tea and coffee.....!

And Carers are now...

Learning about advocacy..... experiencing a Govan ship launch..... being taught stress management techniques and confidence-building techniques..... hearing about the work of the Maggie's Centre..... visiting Glasgow Police Museum and Transport Museum..... trying art therapy..... and much, much more!

“If it wasn't good I wouldn't come so often!”

“I really get a lot out of this, it's an opportunity to talk and meet up with others”

“Blether and Men's Group are really now part of my life - have met some really excellent fellow Carers”

“I find the group relaxing and meeting people who are Carers helps me”

“Enjoy getting to see places I have not been since the children were young”

LOOKING AHEAD

Carers Link has undergone a great amount of change and growth over our 5 years, so as we look ahead it is with the intention instead of consolidating developments so far and securing funding that will enable us to continue our current services. Our core funding is due for review at the end of March 2010 and funding for the Choose Life Services and Men's Group is due to end. Any further development for the organisation will be dependent on maintaining funding.

Nevertheless, key activities for 2009 - 2010 will include:

- Devising our new Business Plan to guide us over the next three years
- Expanding the current Caring With Confidence programme
- Launching our new-look Website with Intranet facility for staff
- Developing our Information Resources
- Identifying additional funding streams and encouraging fundraising to strengthen and sustain our support for Carers

Months of hard work were put in over the Spring to complete a funding application to the Big Lottery for a much-needed full-time Peer Support Worker to work specifically with older people becoming Carers in later life, giving them access to information, advocacy and support. The hard work paid off and our new worker will start later in 2009!

5 BIG questions for the future from Carers UK, 2009

1. When will Carers' benefits be improved?
2. How will the personalisation agenda affect Carers?
3. What will be done about the crisis in social care?
4. Will new legal rights in discrimination translate into real change?
5. How do we make sure Carers remain in work if they choose?

The move to our larger new office in late 2008 has made a huge difference to all staff and Volunteers at Carers Link. Our original office is now put to good use as a meeting and training room, and is a good space for some of our Carer groups.



FUNDRAISING

Demand for our services grows every year. With new staff, Volunteers and a larger office, financial pressure means that fundraising is now increasingly important. We have produced a new fundraising leaflet 'Help Us Help Carers' and a flyer to encourage people to walk the West Highland Way - after all, we are the first charity on the route!

We thank everyone who has made invaluable donations of either funds or time. Truly, Carers Link would function much less smoothly without either.

5 Fundraising ideas:

- Be sponsored - Carers Link has already raised over £500 by people walking on the West Highland Way
- Donate your coins - Look out for our new collecting cans & boxes!
- Gift Giving Cards - When you cannot think of a present to buy...
- easyfundraising.org.uk
We receive a donation every time you buy online
- Be a regular donor - making even a small commitment of a monthly gift helps us to plan ahead

easyfundraising
.org.uk



Individual Donors over 5 Years

AD
Anonymous
Anonymous
Anonymous
(in memory of Ann Dunbar)
Anonymous
Anonymous
Anonymous
Anonymous
Anonymous
(in memory of Ann Dunbar)
Anonymous
AT
Barry McKeown
Brenna Campbell

Carol McKellar
Dorothy Crawford
DC
Gerry McAuley
GM
HD
Jessica Smyrl
Jim Fitzpatrick
Joan Reid
Joe Bloggs
John Cowie
JC
Lesley Campbell
Lisa Melrose

Louise Keiller
Margaret Hutchison
Marie McFarlane
Mary Fitzpatrick
Nora Liberi
Peggy Dallas
Sarah Ross
Sheila Stewart
(in memory of Ann Dunbar)
Stuart Teese
Susan Henderson
Theresa Morrison
William MacFarlane
WP

Summary of Income and Expenditure for the year 1st April 2008 to 31st March 2009

Income (Total £247,861)

East Dunbartonshire Council £200,636

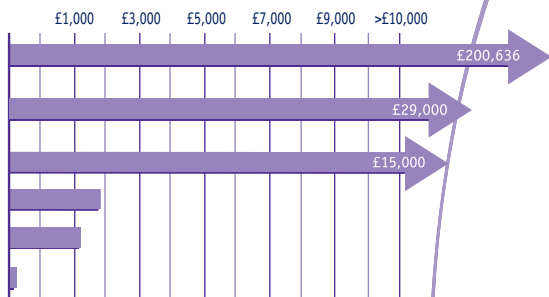
East Dunbartonshire Community Health Partnership £29,000

Choose Life (EDC) £15,000

Bank Interest £1,926

Donations £1,199

Other Income £100



Expenditure (Total £181,104)

Salary & Pension Costs £158,605

Property Costs £24,392

Office Running Costs £6806

Information, Printing & Promotion £6117

Internet & Telephone £3847

Events & Training £3661

ITC Support & Software £3,152

Volunteer Travel £2,662

Staff Travel £2,238

Staff Training £2058

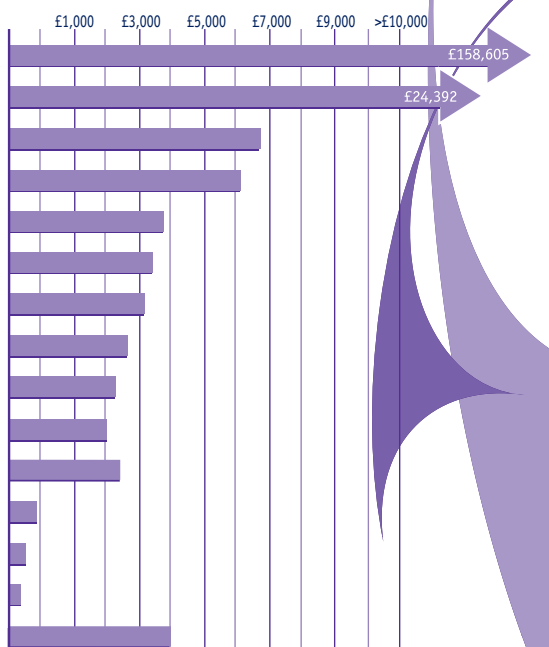
Accountancy & Professional Fees £2,420

Recruitment £400

Bank Charges £213

David Campbell Trust Awards £200

Depreciation £4,087



The Statement of Financial Activities shows a surplus of **£27,003** for the year to 31st March 2009. The Board of Management has designated some of this surplus towards developing our Information service and other restricted funds within the surplus for developing our Caring With Confidence Activities. **Total Net Assets at 31st March 2009 are £99,338, however of these, £82,305 are Restricted Funds.**

The restricted funds from East Dunbartonshire Council are for the purposes of providing Carer Services and related staff and office costs, as detailed in the Service Level Agreement. Additional restricted funds are from (i) East Dunbartonshire Community Health Partnership for purposes of implementing the NHS Carer Information Strategy locally, in particular providing training for Carers and (ii) East Dunbartonshire Choose Life Strategy for the purposes of providing support to Carers and Older People at risk.

Of the above expenditure, £7,192 was spent on Governance Costs such as the cost of Accountancy Fees, Annual General Meetings, Communication with Members, Board Meetings and Board Training.

It is the policy of the Directors to strive towards a level of reserves representing 3 months running costs, and a detailed Reserves Policy is available on request.

DAVID CAMPBELL TRUST

David Campbell was passionate in his support of East Dunbartonshire's Carers and was one of our founder board members, working tirelessly for Carers Link and several other local voluntary organisations until his death in October 2005.

Set up with a donation from his family in David's memory, the David Campbell Trust aims to help local community groups, voluntary bodies or charities in East Dunbartonshire that help Carers in some way, either directly or indirectly. At last year's AGM, Mrs Brenna Campbell presented an award of £200 to The Way Ahead Group, which provides activities and outings for people who have had a stroke, and their Carers. They were represented by Anne Wightman (Co-ordinator), John Young (Treasurer) and Greta Paterson (Committee Member) who expressed their delight at receiving the funding, and at the difference it would make to their members.



If you know of a group or organisation that may be able to benefit from the Trust please contact us.

Summary of Income and Expenditure for the year

1st April 2008 to 31st March 2009

Balance at 1st April 2008	£916
Income - Donations	£284
Expenditure - Trust Awards	(£200)
Balance at 31st March 2009	£1000

Trustees

Brenna Campbell
Dorothy Crawford
Susan Henderson
George Ross

MEMBERSHIP OF CARERS LINK

Our membership now stands at 125 members, of whom 7 are organisations and 118 individual Carers or people interested in issues affecting Carers. Our members now receive a Members Newsletter three times during the year - in addition to our new regular 'What's On' bulletin. We have received great feedback about our Members Newsletter following a survey and we are now incorporating some of the suggestions for articles.

“Very interesting newsletter, nice to read with a cup of tea!”



“The newsletter is always interesting”

“Newsletter does not need improving, but more Carer stories please”

PEOPLE

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

We continue to maintain a very high level of caring experience on the Board with nearly all having current or previous caring experiences, and all Directors either live or work in East Dunbartonshire. During the year of this review, our Directors were:

Julia Campbell	Co-opted 12th February 2008, appointed 14th November 2008
Dorothy Crawford (Treasurer)	Appointed 14th July 2004
David Delaney	Appointed 14th July 2004
Ann Dunbar	Appointed 16th November 2007, died 17th June 2009
Susan Henderson	Appointed 20th September 2004
Sue Mitchell	Appointed 16th November 2007
Mike Molyneux (Vice-Chair)	Appointed 20th September 2004, resigned 23rd June 2009
Adrian Murtagh	Appointed 24th November 2006
Jenny Proctor	Appointed 14th July 2004
Fiona Risk	Co-opted 29th August 2007 Appointed 16th November 2007
Gordon Thomson	Appointed 19th September 2005
Norman Williamson	Appointed 16th November 2007, resigned 17th October 2008

EMPLOYEES (* indicates part-time post)

Jonathan Berry	Peer Support Worker*
Fiona Campbell	Peer Support Co-ordinator
Moira Carrick	Resource Co-ordinator - Information*
Margaret Coats	Resource Co-ordinator - Finance*
Sharon Moncrieff	Peer Support Co-ordinator
Paul Peter	Lead Support Co-ordinator
Jennifer Roe	Chief Executive Officer
Alex Sinclair	Resource Worker - Peer Support*
Norman Williamson	Peer Support Worker*



Carers Link staff go green at the 2008 AGM

Employed 4th November 2008
Employed 6th November 2007
Employed 2nd August 2004
Employed 18th September 2006
Employed 2nd August 2004
Employed 18th July 2006
Employed 10th March 2003
Employed 11th April 2006
Employed 4th November 2008

AUDITORS

Bell Barr and Company
2 Stewart Street, Milngavie
G62 6BW

BANKERS

Lloyds TSB
Glasgow North Business & Commercial
3rd Floor, 193 Bath Street, Glasgow G2 4HU

Carers Link is Registered in Scotland as a Company Limited by Guarantee Number 270702
Recognised as a Scottish Charity Number SC 034447

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Website: www.carerslink.org.uk



**INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE**



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www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk



East Dunbartonshire
Community Health Partnership