



Annual Review  
April 2016 - March 2017  
Navigating Uncharted Waters

# Carers Link East Dunbartonshire Annual Review, April 2016 – March 2017

Welcome to the Thirteenth Annual Review of Carers Link East Dunbartonshire. The theme this year is “Navigating Uncharted Waters”, a reflection of the fact that although the Carers (Scotland) 2016 Act was given Royal Assent in March 2016, the regulation and guidance will not be finalised until January 2018, coming into effect in April 2018. With so much yet to be decided, Carers Link has been supporting carers to deal with their current situation but also making sure that their thoughts and experiences are fed into the development of new plans and legislation.

*\*The names of some carers have been changed throughout these pages in order to protect their identity.*

## 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.

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## WELCOME ABOARD

The theme of this year's Annual Review is "Navigating uncharted waters", and there has definitely been a great deal of uncertainty at home, in the UK and on the world stage.

We have witnessed extraordinary and terrifying scenes whilst austerity has continued to hit people – including carers - like a ship trapped in the doldrums, with food banks becoming Britain's biggest growth industry. Meantime, and inevitably, we saw increased demand for our services, often by carers living in very challenging circumstances. We continue to fight for their human rights, with all the resources at our disposal.

The preparation for the implementation of the Carers (Scotland) 2016 Act has given carers an opportunity to further influence aspects of the act, and we have been gathering carers' views to feed in, as well as encouraging carers to comment directly. The Act also requires that carers and carer organisations must be involved in the planning, shaping, delivery and review of services, which means that these opportunities will be ongoing, and I encourage all of you to make your voices heard – our Carers Forum offers a great opportunity for you to do this.

Below and above decks, as always, there have been plenty of good times. There have been sailing trips for carers of all ages, young and older, as well as a boat trip for our volunteers. Not just on the sea, our sponsored walk was a huge success, despite the blisters and sore knees.

Sadly, we said goodbye to Alister Reid and Paul Scott, to Sharon Moncrieff who left after 12 years with Carers Link, and to Margaret Coats who retired after 11 years with us. May they have a fair breeze and no reefs or shoals on their new voyages in life!

I pay tribute to the support and kindness I have received from my fellow trustees, our staff, and members. Carers Link is much more than Members, Volunteers, Staff or Trustees, it is a genuine fellowship of shipmates, and I have been honoured to serve as your Navigator in Chief for the year.



*The Chairman keeps a watchful eye on his son, Jordan, whilst sailing on Loch Ness, accompanied by Mollie the Collie.*  
Photo by Liz Kay

**Rob Kay**  
Chairperson



**1161** individual carers received direct support.



**397** carers contacted us for the first time.



Volunteers provided our Carers Call service to **669** carers, making a total of **5016** calls.



Our Facebook page currently has **551** likes and is a great way of keeping up to date with what's happening within the organisation. If you haven't already liked our page then please do and show your support.



A massive thank you to our volunteers for donating **5526** hours of their time, worth £84,437\*.



Our **Creative Breaks** funding was a great success with **24** carers getting funding towards a break from their caring role.

*\*Based on Scottish median wage 2016*



Young Carers (aged 8 to 16 years old) attended **13** activities during the school holidays and a further **22** groups throughout the year.

*I like it because it is fun, exciting, amazing. They're so nice and everyone meets new friends and we go fun places and do activities.*

*I like the young carers group because I can meet lots of new friends!!!  
And lots of fun activities!!!*



**292** carers booked **510** places on training courses

- 90% felt better informed
- 92% felt more confident
- 93% felt less stressed
- 91% felt that they could apply what they had learned at home.



**93** carer groups took part throughout the whole of East Dunbartonshire with a whopping **993** attendances.



Carers Link membership currently stands at **292** members. If you would like to become a member please call 0800 975 2131. It's free and a great way to show your support.

## SETTING A COURSE

The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 received Royal Assent on 9th March 2016, and the regulations will take effect on 1st April 2018. The Act aims to improve the support that adult and young carers whose needs meet the local eligibility criteria receive from their local authority. The time between the Act receiving Royal Assent and being implemented is being used to develop the regulations, Carers Charter and local eligibility criteria.

East Dunbartonshire Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) delivers health and social care services locally, and will set the local eligibility criteria. Carers are involved in the planning process of services in a number of ways. Avril Jamieson represents carers on the Strategic Planning Group of East Dunbartonshire HSCP, and is a member of the Carers Working Group. She says:

*“With the next 3 year plan beginning to be drafted I feel we can have greater input. It is a privilege to take forward carers’ views and, although a bit hectic at times, it helps get some of our thoughts and views into writing and in place.”*



## RIG OF THE SHIP

Carers deserve the same life chances that other people enjoy - good health, financial security, the right to a family life, and opportunities to work and pursue their own interests. But the reality can be vastly different. That's where our advocacy service comes in, helping people to find out about and access the services available. Advocacy supports people to gain access to information and to explore options and consider possible outcomes. Most importantly it helps ensure that people's views, opinions and wishes are listened to and taken into account when decisions are made about their lives. One example of this is putting together an emergency plan which helps people to think about what will happen if they are unexpectedly unable to look after the person they care for.

Lucy has a full time job and was interested in completing an emergency plan as it would mean that all the relevant information about her mum would be available at home. On completing the plan Lucy emailed:

*"Can I say how much I enjoyed yesterday's meeting. It was very helpful and reassuring."*



## ANCHOR'S AWEIGH

Every Young Carer's situation is different. It is not necessarily the amount of care that they provide that is important, but the impact that it has on their life. Carers Link offers Young Carers a listening ear as well as regular groups for them to meet, and the chance to go on outings, where their enjoyment is the focus, something which may not always be possible with their families.



*"I love that I can say how I feel and people actually understand, and I find it a comfort knowing that I'm not alone in my caring role."*



*"The thing I enjoy most is having the opportunity to talk to someone who is in the same place as me and I can be let loose and I don't need to think about."*

## FORGING AHEAD

Our Young Adult Carers have enjoyed a wide range of social events providing them with the chance to chat to other young people who have similar experiences.

*"I have not had much of a life for myself and it's been difficult dealing with a stressful situation. I didn't go out anywhere or have any social life, but since joining Carers Link I have been able to go along to the Young Adult Carer group and just let go of everything else. It has helped me to build my confidence and try new things that I would never have tried."*



An important part of the support we offer Young Adult Carers is one to one support to help them identify what they want to achieve in their lives, and what and who can help them get there. This includes helping them to apply for college places, apprenticeships, work placements and jobs.

*"Life as a Young Adult Carer can be quite challenging especially when you have to juggle around commitments like your education, work, your responsibilities and sometimes you're too exhausted to think about having a social life! I know that I have Carers Link to back me up if I need it, supporting me to apply for college, creating my CV and applying for jobs. Since being with Carers Link my confidence has soared - I got a job, I'm back at college and learning to drive."*

## AHOY ME HEARTIES

Caring for someone you love can be very rewarding, but it can also sometimes feel like a huge responsibility. Their caring role can mean that carers become stressed and socially isolated, with the time taken up with looking after the person and going to appointments leaving no time for themselves. Carers often don't want to talk about their concerns to friends and other family members, as they don't want to feel that they are betraying the person they care for. This is where Carers Link, and our volunteers, can help.

People who receive support through Carers Call often describe it as a lifeline, and a regular call from one of our trained volunteers can make a huge difference:

*"The volunteer not only listens to my problems but shares some of his own experiences and how he has coped himself. It feels like a personal call and a real conversation – I'm not just a number. He reminds me of things I have forgotten, like eating well, keeping active etc."*



*"You can't necessarily tell the family everything.... Having a listening ear makes a huge difference."*

*".. very reassuring to know that someone was there. She was a very good listener. I don't share my business easily, even with good friends, but I felt I could be free with her. It was good to have the same person calling and not have to repeat the story as I have had to do with so many health professionals."*

## ALL HANDS ON DECK

Volunteers are the engine room of Carers Link. A lot of our volunteers are or were carers, and many want to give something back and make a difference to carers' lives. For others, volunteering gives them an opportunity to use their experience and knowledge to help others, or to challenge themselves and gain new skills. Whoever they are, and whatever their reason for volunteering, without them we would not be able to deliver many of the services that we do.

And volunteering is not all about being in the office – volunteers are developing our Carers Garden, and we also arrange social outings such as a boat trip along the Forth and Clyde canal.

*“Supporting carers is important to me - there are lots of other things I could do but I choose to do this. I was a carer myself many years ago, and I wish that Carers Link had been there at the time to give me advice and support.”*



*“I have no experience of caring but I know many people who care for a relative, so when I was looking for volunteering work with a charity, Carers Link looked interesting and worthwhile. It has proved to be both. And the support (and humour!) in the office every week make coming in an extra pleasure.”*



## SEA CHANGE

Carers Link received a grant from the People's Postcode Lottery which has enabled us to provide additional support to families supporting people on the autistic spectrum through group and one to one sessions.

Autism affects how a person communicates with and relates to other people, and how they experience the world around them. This can cause high levels of stress and possibly challenging behaviour, which can affect the whole family. The support that Carers Link provides helps families understand, cope with, and reduce the challenging behaviour of the individual with autism, making them less anxious and stressed, and be confident to plan for the future.

*"Attending group sessions and having several 1 to 1 sessions, both on my own and with my son, made a massive difference and took massive pressure off me. Heather fully understood the complexities of Asperger's in terms of health, safety, and hygiene." The sessions also benefitted her son, who said that "Heather did more for me in 3 hours than other agencies did in ten years."*



*"The session will enable me to apply various techniques and strategies in our daily routines to benefit not only our daughter but our whole family."*



## SHOWING THE ROPES

Very few people plan to become an unpaid carer, and carers often tell us how stressful the demands of caring can be. Carers Link can help carers learn the new skills needed to care for their loved one, and to do all of this without drowning under the stresses and strains of their caring role. Our courses and information sessions cover a wide range of subjects, from dementia to first aid and carers rights to Tai Chi, and the mindfulness courses are proving particularly popular with carers.

*"The course gave me an insight into how I can go forward - time will prove to be of great importance to me and I will pursue some of the ideas put forward today."*

*"All the Carers Link courses I have attended have been useful in a variety of ways. The most beneficial to me has been the four week mindfulness course and the events that have followed on from that. I think mindfulness can help anyone, and especially carers. At the centre of the course was being kind to ourselves, which is something carers often forget to do, or else we put it off amidst the bustle of caring for our loved one. Making our own well-being a priority, even if only for brief moments, is essential for all of us."*



## PASS THE WORD

Our support groups are a social highlight for carers, and can be the only chance for a break away from home. Many carers have formed friendships and share interests outside of the groups.

*"We are like Mutt and Geoff. We have become close friends, we have helped each other through."*

*"I only go to Carers Link. My family say it is my social life."*

*"I have gone back to work, but negotiated some time off to attend the crafty carers. I would not miss meeting my friends for anything."*



On one occasion students from Douglas Academy prepared lunch boxes for our delighted carers. One carer took time to write: *"Caring for someone involves a great deal of time. Not having too many opportunities to socialise makes one even more grateful, especially when young people like your pupils are involved."*

We also organise occasional outings for our carers, such as a trip to the Falkirk Wheel and on the rotating boat lift or our Men's group visits to the Police Museum and the Sharmanka Kinetic Theatre.



## SHIPSHAPE

Wellbeing Reviews can help carers think about what changes they want to make so they stay healthy and fit to continue to care for the person they love. We all have a treasure hidden somewhere within ourselves and during the process of a review carers are motivated and encouraged to discover that treasure, using any and all of the services and support that is available locally.

*“Judith has been very easy to talk to and is a great listener. I found her very approachable and also very supportive.”*

*“I had no idea that so much help was available and where to go for advice.”*

*“The Wellbeing service made me realise that by not taking care of myself I wasn’t able to look after my family and the impact it has on everyone – I feel stronger since using the service.”*

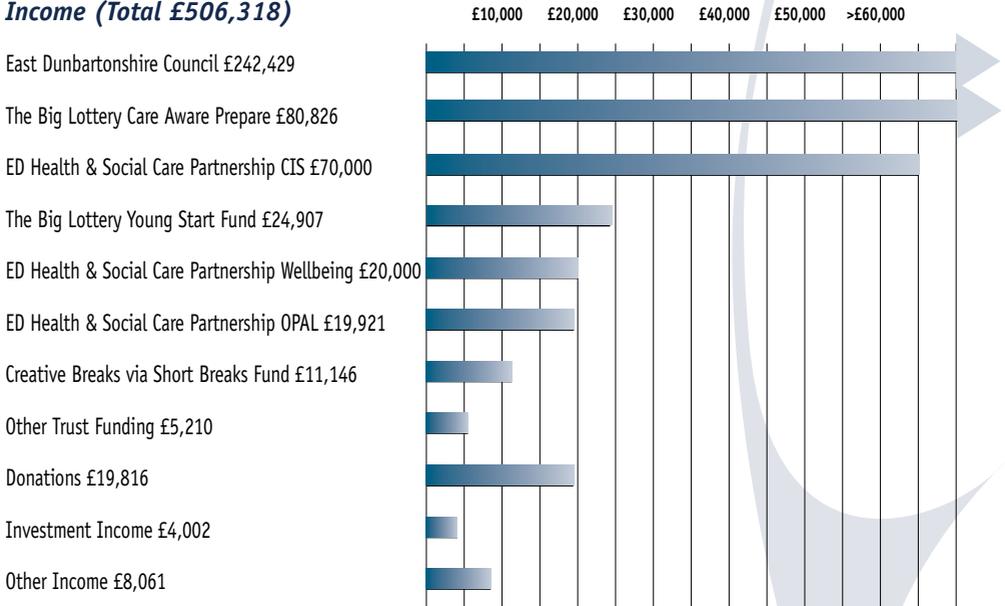
*“When I was feeling particularly low Judith sent emails to encourage me.”*



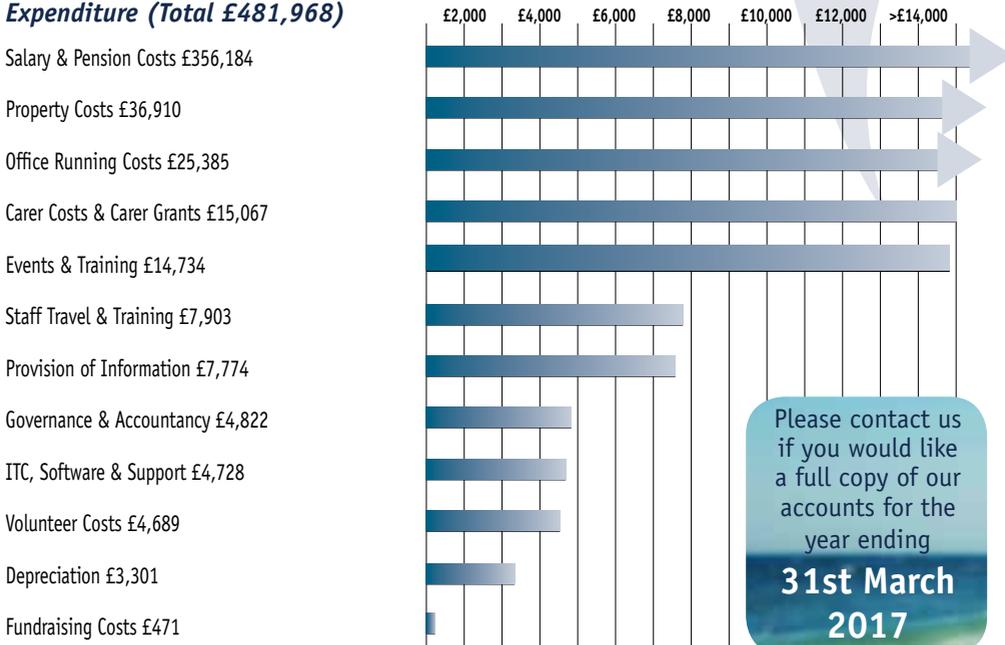
# BURIED TREASURE

## Summary of Income and Expenditure for the year 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017

### Income (Total £506,318)



### Expenditure (Total £481,968)



Please contact us if you would like a full copy of our accounts for the year ending

**31st March 2017**

The Statement of Financial Activities shows an overall surplus of £24,350 for the year to 31st March 2017. This uncommon occurrence is through the amazing fundraising efforts from the previous year and the salary savings achieved from having a staff member on maternity leave. Total Net Assets at 31st March 2017 are £246,235 however of this only £86,983 are classed as 'free' or unrestricted reserves, the remainder being £159,252 of Restricted Funds.

Additional funds totalling £28,078 are listed as deferred grants for 2018/19. All details of the nature of Restricted Funds and Deferred Grants are listed within the full Accounts. Please just ask for a copy!

## PIECES OF EIGHT

Thanks to fundraising efforts, we have been able to build up our reserves. Whilst we have to keep some aside for emergencies we are also spending now. Our unrestricted reserves are being used to enable carers to attend counselling or to have a relaxation therapy session. We also used our reserves to continue our Young Adult Carer services when between funds and to 'buy time' for our Link @nd Learn service.

Over the past year we have been trying to increase the ways in which people can help us to raise funds. To engage with people who aren't already involved with Carers Link, we held a Smoothie Challenge as part of the Classic Car Show in Milngavie and great fun was had by all.

However we are also trying to attract additional Trust funding to expand our range of services. We successfully applied to the Short Breaks Fund (with funding from the Scottish Government) for Creative Break funding. This provides individual grants to carers to design their own break, whether a stay on a hotel or a regular visit to the hairdressers!

June and her family took her dad to a hotel that could cater for his disabilities for a few days. This gave June the chance to go for long walks, sit by the lakeside and visit nearby places.

***"I was very much at breaking point and the break came at the right time. I felt much better when I came back to the normal stress of the caring role. Mentally it gave me time away from my worries and the constant barrage of emails and phone calls at all times of the day."***



2017 – 2018 sees Carers Link sailing further into uncharted waters as we anticipate the potential impacts of the Carers Act on both services and funding.

In the meantime, it is full steam ahead with developments within our current services:



- Developing our Carers Forum.
- Publishing our Future Planning Toolkit.
- Developing our Carers Garden.
- Seeking continuation funding for our short-break grants and launching our new Drop in the Ocean Fund.
- An interim external evaluation of the services for older carers.
- Implementing our new database and ensuring that we are compliant with the new General Data Protection Regulations.
- Redesigning and relaunching our websites.
- Developing strong links with GP Practices through our Wellbeing Service.
- Increasing our community fundraising activities – look out for 'Walk with Us (Again)' in 2018!
- All hands hoay – an intergenerational sailing trip with the Ocean Youth Trust.



## SHIPMATES

### BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Our Directors between April 2016– March 2017 were (in order of appointment):

<b>Bridie Grogan</b>	November 2010 (resigned November 2016)
<b>Margaret Hamilton</b>	February 2012
<b>Rob Kay (Chair)</b>	February 2012
<b>Sandra Wilson</b>	November 2012
<b>Patricia Atkinson (Vice-Chair)</b>	November 2013
<b>Eileen Bell</b>	November 2014 (resigned November 2016)
<b>Gillian MacNaughton</b>	November 2014
<b>Derek McLean</b>	November 2014
<b>Margo Fraser</b>	November 2014
<b>Dorothy Crawford</b>	October 2016
<b>Susan Young (Treasurer)</b>	November 2016

### EMPLOYEES

Between April 2016 – March 2017, our staff members were (in order of employment):  
(\* indicates part-time)

<b>Jennifer Roe</b>	Chief Executive Officer	March 2003
<b>Sharon Moncrieff</b>	Volunteers Co-ordinator	August 2004 (left September 2016)
<b>Paul Peter</b>	Operational Manager	July 2006
<b>Margaret Coats*</b>	Finance Manager	September 2006 (left March 2017)
<b>Fiona Campbell</b>	Lead Advocacy Co-ordinator	November 2007
<b>Jon Berry</b>	Lead Training Co-ordinator	November 2008
<b>Heather McKelvie*</b>	Events Co-ordinator	September 2010
<b>Rose Barr*</b>	Peer Support Co-ordinator	June 2012
<b>Emma Azzopardi</b>	Young Carers Co-ordinator	July 2012
<b>Alister Reid</b>	Online Training Co-ordinator	January 2013 (left April 2016)
<b>Paul Scott*</b>	Resource Worker	May 2013 (left September 2016)
<b>Clair Hegarty</b>	Office Manager	June 2014
<b>Judith Gaertner*</b>	Wellbeing Co-ordinator	August 2014
<b>Amrit Kaur Bedi*</b>	Community Support Co-ordinator	November 2014
<b>Jan McGregor*</b>	Young Start Co-ordinator	March 2015
<b>Katy Green*</b>	Information Co-ordinator	April 2015
<b>Fiona Farris</b>	Volunteers Co-ordinator	November 2016
<b>Nicky McMann</b>	Finance Administrator	December 2016
<b>Brian Quinn</b>	Young Carers Worker	February 2017

## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR

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

## BANK

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Carers Link staff in denim at the AGM 2016

Carers Link is Registered in Scotland as a Company  
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**INVESTORS  
IN PEOPLE**



**CARER POSITIVE**  
Employer in Scotland  
**EXEMPLARY**

Our thanks to the following funders for the period April 2016 to March 2017.

