

My main role as a Trustee has been to be the Lead Coordinator for the transport service taking patients to their appointments at the surgery or at hospital. We have not stopped offering our services at any time this year – even through the Covid crisis. The pandemic did however seriously affect the numbers we were able to help and it changed the nature of our role. Prior to the crisis we were helping to transport about 15 patients a week and this number dropped drastically to about 5 a week.

True to our status as a charity, we were still keen to respond to the need to help our patients in any appropriate way.

To this end, we stepped in to help patients by

- delivering their medication to their home
- providing a shopping service
- collecting unwanted food parcels and taking them to the Community Food Bank in Wealdstone
- providing a weekly telephone contact with those living on their own and unable to leave their home

All of these things took place under the guidance of the Pinn Medical Centre and all help was filtered and led by them. There were some lifts provided in exceptional circumstances and very strict precautions were always in place to safeguard our Volunteer Drivers and the Patients themselves. Masks and gloves were always worn by Driver and Patient and the cars were always well ventilated by the opening of the Driver's window at all times during the journey.

As we emerge from the ravages of the pandemic, the Patient Association would like to continue to provide the increased range of services and I formally recommended to the Board of Trustees that we do so to which they readily agreed. It will form part of a new-look provision for our Patients as we continue to evolve alongside the planned changes in the administration of the NHS locally.

It remains for me to pay tribute to the 42 Volunteer Drivers on our database. I am always particularly grateful for the unselfish and generous support they so willingly provide.

Thank you all of you, it is a privilege to work with you on such a vital and important service for people in need.

And to the Coordinators –

- Sheila Cole,
- Rosalind Cooper,
- Orla Beardwell and
- Sally Tawil

- who give up their time on a regular basis to man the phone, efficiently book the Volunteer Drivers and problem-solve so many issues as they do so.

Thank you for what you do, without you there would be no transport service at all.

And to you, the members of the Patient Association, I extend an invitation for you to contact me should you wish to join us in helping to maintain the excellent present provision and to play your part in the exciting future that lies ahead of us as we extend and improve those services still further