

# BENEFICIARY NEWS 2020



The Royal Society for the Support of Women of Scotland

## *Changing faces in the RSSWS staff team...*

This year has seen quite a bit of change in the RSSWS staff team based here in Rutland Square. In March 2020 Dr Maurice Hankey retired as Chief Executive of the Society and has been replaced by Andrew Tweedy.

Andrew lives in the Borders with his wife and 2 daughters. He studied Social Policy at the London School of Economics where he specialised in both Social Security Policy and the impact of Social Policy on women. He has worked in a range of roles

including managing the Welfare Rights team in the Borders, helping set up the Scottish



Public Services Ombudsman's office and most recently as Chief Executive of Carers of East Lothian.

Additionally, Anne Metcalfe will retire from her role as Senior Caseworker in May. [cont. over ...]

## *Coronavirus, RSSWS and you!*

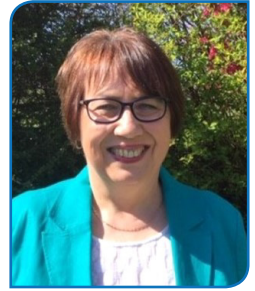
Within the RSSWS Team we are very aware many Beneficiaries are Key Workers – NHS staff, care workers and shop workers to name a few roles that we know Beneficiaries work in. We want to say a **big thank you** to you all for

providing the essential services that the rest of us rely on during the Coronavirus outbreak.

Like everyone else, RSSWS has had to adapt the way we work at this difficult time. We quickly suspended all visiting and [cont ...]

## *Changing faces... [continued]*

Her Casework role in the West of Scotland will be taken on by Pam Samson who joined the staff team at the start of May 2020. Pam is from Dumfriesshire and worked as a Case Officer with RSABI for over 20 years where she made a significant contribution to the work of the Charity in the aftermath of the Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak and has continued to provide an exceptional service for RSABI. She will start to introduce herself to the Beneficiaries she will be working with over the next few months.



## *Sad Farewells*

Of course, while the Society is pleased to welcome new staff, doing so also brings the sadness of having to say goodbye to old friends.

Dr Hankey joined the Society in 2014, becoming the first Chief Executive and steering the Society through many changes, not least of which was the change to our name and Royal Charter. He has penned a few words of farewell on page 4 of this Newsletter.

Anne Metcalfe joined the Society in 2013 has supported literally thousands of women in her time. Her “patch” covered everywhere from the most southerly point in Scotland though to Argyll with Glasgow, Ayrshire and Lanarkshire in between.

Anne says “I have very much enjoyed my time as Senior Caseworker with the Society. It has been a great pleasure to visit Beneficiaries throughout Scotland even with the challenges of Scottish winters and some very early mornings! It has also been a great privilege to work with such a wonderful team of staff and Trustees but it’s now time to hang up the car keys and enjoy retirement!”



Catriona Reynolds, Chair of the Society’s Trustees, states that “Both Maurice and Anne have made enormous contributions to the work of RSSWS. On behalf of the General Committee I would like to extend our sincere appreciation for all their hard work and to wish them all the best in their retirement. I know both the Committee and the staff team will miss their knowledge, patience and good humour hugely!”

## *Spotlight on useful services...*

### **Are you a “carer”? Around 700,000 of us in Scotland are!**



In 2015 the Scottish Government estimated that there were 690,000 adult carers living in Scotland – that means over 1 adult in every 6 is a carer. By carer we mean someone who provides care or support to a family member or a friend who is frail, disabled or who has chronic health problems. Commonly people who are in fact “carers” tend not to identify with the term – they provide care out of love and affection and think a carer is someone paid to care – and they tend to put the needs of the person they care for first rather than think about their own need for support. But there is a lot of evidence that

being an unpaid carer can take a toll on health and well-being and there is support available for carers – advice or information which could help the carer AND the person they care for.

All local areas have a “Carers Centre” that will be able to provide you with local advice and support. Your local Social Work services or Libraries should be able to tell you how to contact them. Additionally, Carers Scotland is a national organisation that can provide an advice helpline and can signpost you to your local carers centre – contact them on 0808 808 7777.

## *Coronavirus, RSSWS & you! [Continued]*

have instead been keeping in contact by phone. All staff are working from home and the miracle of modern technology (and a lot of support from Graeme Whyte – one of the Society’s Trustees and our IT guru) has meant that we have been able to do so with minimal disruption to our support and no interruption to our payments. We are continuing to assess new applications by phone and are taking a pragmatic approach to the evidence that we normally ask for

as we know that it is difficult for many just now.

This is an anxious and unsettling time for all of us and we are very aware that many Beneficiaries will face additional challenges – from living alone to facing loss of earnings. The Society is committed to doing all we can to support you and if you need to contact us you can do so via [info@rssws.org](mailto:info@rssws.org) or call and leave a message on 0131 229 2308 and we will call you back.

## Staff News...

### Congratulations to Lucy!

All the RSSWS Caseworkers drive many miles in their travels around the country to visit Beneficiaries but none as many as Lucy as she criss-crosses the Highlands and Islands. We have challenged all Caseworkers to get their Institute of Advanced Motorists Advanced Driver Course and Lucy is the first to have achieved this milestone. Any guesses on who will be next – but don't hold your breath!?



## Farewell...



### Parting words from Dr Hankey

Some six years ago I answered an advert for the “part-time” post of Secretary of the IGF. Little did I know at that time how big a “part” of my time and life the role would go on to occupy, but having now retired as Chief Executive of RSSWS I can only say that it has been a privilege to have led the charity for the past five and a half years. I have enjoyed the role immensely...it is a hugely satisfying job, in a fantastic charity we know makes a huge difference

to people's lives, and I have been fortunate to have had a dream team to work with, all of whom I shall miss.

On arrival, I said that I did not wish to change anything but quickly realised that the Society needed to evolve to meet the needs of those already on the Roll and of those coming to it afresh for support. We have come a long way in a few years, but the baton has now been passed to Andrew and I wish him and his new team a fair wind!

## Information about our payments...

### Confirmation RSSWS's support should NOT impact your other benefits and pensions

We are aware that some Beneficiaries are concerned that if they get support from the Society it may impact their other benefits. We also know that, regrettably, some people have experienced problems with their Universal Credit payments when they have received support from the Society.

Because the Society is a Charity, any income you receive from us should be considered to be a charitable payment by both the DWP and Local Authorities and so should be totally ignored by them in their calculations. We have now received written confirmation of this

from the Head of Universal Credit Neil Couling (you may have seen him on the recent TV documentary) that “charitable payments are fully disregarded”.

It is important to tell the Benefit Authorities about the payments you receive from the Society but be sure you list them as “**charitable** income” – not “other income” – when you do so and this should avoid problems. However, if you do run into difficulties seek advice from your local CAB or Welfare Rights Service and please do also let us know in the RSSWS office.

### Challenging times for the RSSWS Investment Sub-Committee

Not many of us have to worry about the state of the Stock Market but the Investment Sub-Committee does. The majority of the Society's income comes from dividends paid on shares that the Society owns as well as some interest from fixed term investments. As you will have seen in the media, the FTSE 100 share index (see chart) has fallen dramatically since February 2020.

The cautious approach taken by the Society, and our cash reserves, will insulate us to a certain extent but this will remain an issue we have to monitor closely.



# *Staff Team—who we are and what we do*



## **Helen Dalley – Welfare Manager**

Helen studied Law and has worked in a variety of Charities. From May 2020 she has become our Welfare Manager having previously worked as both a Caseworker and Grants Eligibility Assessor for the Society.



## **Lucy McRitchie – Caseworker – North**

Lucy worked as a registered nurse for 41 years before joining the Society. She supports Beneficiaries and assesses new applications from women in the Highlands, Islands, the North East and Highland Perthshire.



## **Sonia Love – Caseworker – South & East**

Sonia worked as a registered Occupational Therapist before joining the Society. She supports Beneficiaries and assesses new applications from women in the Lothians, Fife, Borders and some parts of Central Scotland.



## **Pam Samson – Caseworker – West**

Pam worked for RSABI before joining the Society. She supports Beneficiaries and assesses new applications from women in Glasgow, Argyll and Bute, the South West and some parts of Central Scotland.



## **Sharon Moffat – Administrator**

Sharon joined the Society from college and has been with us for over 30 years. She ensures the smooth running of our office and we would all be lost without her!



## **Andrew Tweedy – Chief Executive**

Andrew supports the work of the Society's Trustees and has been delegated by them to have day to day responsibility and authority for the operations of RSSWS and the grants that we pay.

## Spotlight on useful services...

### Independent and FREE information and advice about home repairs and adaptations



Care and Repair Scotland is a network of 30 local charities who can provide information and advice to home owners about how they can repair, improve or adapt their house to enable them to continue living independently at home in their community. While there may be some variation from one area to another, the vast majority of local services will support people aged 60 or over and younger people who are disabled.

Again, local Social Work services and Libraries should be able to tell you how to contact your local Care and Repair Service or you can contact the national office on 0141 221 9879 who will signpost you to your local organisation.

## Springtime Quiz (see back page for answers!)

1. To the nearest million, how many Easter eggs are sold every year in the UK?
2. Which is the meteorological first day of spring?
3. In Japan, what type of tree famously produces blossom in the spring?
4. How many months are female sheep pregnant for before they give birth to a lamb?
5. What spring flower is often associated with Wales?
6. When was the earliest known use of the phrase 'Spring cleaning' – 1807, 1857 or 1907?

## Trustee News

After an astonishing 17 years as a Trustee, Mr Adrian Johnston has announced his retirement from the General Committee in Sept 2020. Adrian has seen many changes in the Society over the years while ensuring that the Society's finances were carefully stewarded and that it remained focused on its core mission. Catriona Reynolds said "I want to thank Adrian for his enormous contribution to our work over so many years."



## RSSWS Strategy Review

In 2019 the Society commissioned Iconic Consulting to carry out a research project on the opportunities for RSSWS to develop its work supporting women in Scotland. Key findings included that there are estimated to be close to 102,000 single women aged over 50 who are struggling financially. By way of context, last year RSSWS supported 1,032 women – only about 1% of the women who may have met the criteria for our support.

The research highlighted 7 opportunities for the Society including making more single payments, extending our support to younger women and/or on the grounds of ill health, supporting women to find employment and focusing on policy advocacy about those issues which particularly effect women over 50.

There is much food for thought for the Society in the report while we also maintain our commitment to current Beneficiaries. Please contact the office if you would like a copy of the report and if you have strong views on how the Society could or should develop its work please contact Andrew via [andrew.tweedy@rssws.org](mailto:andrew.tweedy@rssws.org).



## Springtime Quiz—answers

- |                |                 |              |
|----------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 1. 80 million! | 3. Cherry Trees | 5. Daffodils |
| 2. 1st March   | 4. 5 months     | 6. 1857      |

## Contact Us...

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Our office is normally open Monday to Friday from 9am to 2pm

