

Friends of Aberfoyle and Buchlyvie Medical Centres

CHARIOTS OF FIRE

When Emma from the Co-op contacted the practice last year, telling us that the Aberfoyle branch had chosen the surgery to benefit from the Cooperative Community Charity Fund, we were both touched and delighted. Discussions got under way to decide on a suitable project. We were keen to choose something which would bring real benefit to our community. It was decided that an ideal use of the funding would be the replacement of some of the older wheelchairs held at the medical centres, with up to date, more user friendly, models.

For decades the practice has operated a free Wheelchair Loan service from both Aberfoyle and Buchlyvie Surgeries. This service is available, not only to our patients, but to visitors and to the wider community. Let me give you just a few examples of how this service can be of help to young and old alike. A wheelchair gives patients with reduced mobility the opportunity to enjoy days out with family and friends; it can be a godsend in helping patients access hospital clinics which are often sited at some distance from the car park. Over the years, a number of our young footballers and athletes have also been glad to use a set of wheels while waiting for their bones to heal!

Over the years the wheelchairs have proven to be worth their weight in gold. Some have been purchased by the practice and "The Friends" group; others have been kindly donated by patients and their families. The magnificent sum raised through the Co-op Community Scheme will enable the purchase of four lightweight, easy-folding models--a great addition to the current stock. Having once spent twenty embarrassing minutes struggling to assemble a wheelchair borrowed to take my mum out shopping, I can attest as to how helpful this will be !

An important additional benefit resulting from the Co-op's initiative has been the opportunity to raise awareness of the scheme. If you feel at any time you would benefit from the loan of a wheelchair, be it for a few hours or a few weeks, or sometimes even for a few months, then simply contact the surgery. Spread the word to anyone else you think might benefit.

A great big thank you from the community must go to Emma and her team at Aberfoyle Co-op and to all the customers who signed up to support this initiative. This is a community effort to fund a resource which will make a real difference to local people. Well done!