

The TAS Partnership Limited
Passenger Transport Specialists

**Community
Transport
& COVID-19
NEWS No.13
15 July 2020
Edited by John Atkins**

TAS is currently supporting the CT sector at a time when unprecedented demands are being placed upon it. Our initial information sheet was circulated on 6 April – this newsletter provides updates. For previous information, newsletters, and further debate on the current crisis, please see TAS website:

<https://taspartnership.co.uk/TAS-news/>

Fitting Partition Screens in Vehicles

Many CT operators have retrofitted screens in vehicles and there are coachbuilders who are able to undertake the work. However, some CTs have reported concerns with testing and approval of such a modification. Our research has established the following:

-) Use of Safety Glass - toughened glass or polycarbonate such as Lexan or Margard. Our suggestion is that when this is purchased, the manufacturer is asked to etch the approval rating in a corner of the sheet – just like you see on bus windows. This can then be part of the photographic record if a choice is made to notify.
-) Vision – the driver's vision must not be impeded – this includes a view of the front entrance and the ability to look in any interior mirror that shows the passenger area.
-) Reflections – care must be taken with reflections, particularly at night. One coachbuilder we approached, when they fit screens behind the driver also fit a "night driving blind" which is a small cassette blind on the driver's side of the screen. A busy junction at night with repeated reflections from both

directions is a significant hazard – this has implications for a lateral screen i.e. immediately to the left of the driver – although clearly many such screens are currently in place in buses. This may be an issue to be dealt with by adjusting the angle of the screen. Don't use tinted glazing to cut down the glare as this will reduce the driver's vision. But an anti-glare treatment would be OK.

-) Avoidance of corners, sharp edges, nuts standing proud, etc.
-) If the screen is mounted on a stanchion, then if that is to be used as a stanchion there will need to be hand clearance along the section of tubing that is likely to be grasped.
-) Use secure (PSV standard) fixings properly attached to the vehicle i.e. to the same standard that a testable item would use.



-) The glazing should meet the standards set out in the IVA Manual (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/iva-manual-for-vehicle-category-m1>)
-) If this an alteration to a non-PSV (i.e. not operated by a PSV O licence holder) minibus we do not think there is a requirement to notify
-) If it is decided that you need to notify, then you should produce a portfolio of photographs and designs, confirming

that compliant Safety Glazing has been used, and attach this to the VTP5 form. There is a strong possibility, particularly at the moment, that the installation will not be called in for an actual inspection or test.

E-Scooters Become Legal in UK

DfT has now legalised e-scooters under trial conditions in a move to ease demand on public transport. However, the vehicles must be hired from a rental operator (who must insure the vehicles) and users must have a category Q entitled driving licence. E-scooters can be used on the road and cycle lanes but not pavements and are restricted to 15.5 mph. The trial is currently restricted to Tees Valley Combined Authority area. There is future potential for CT operators to become approved hiring agencies of e-scooters, especially those projects that have been involved with Shopmobility and Wheels to Work services. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/e-scooter-trials-guidance-for-users> And an article by Zachary Wang in LocalGov suggests a role for local councils in future micro mobility initiatives. <https://www.localgov.co.uk/Putting-councils-in-charge-of-the-micromobility-revolution/50748>



A Question In The House

On 4 June, Baroness Randerson tabled a written question in the House of Lords: "to ask Her Majesty's Government what long-term support they plan to offer to community transport providers to help them adapt vehicles to improve safety for passengers while COVID-19 remains a threat." The reply from Baroness Vere of Norbiton was as follows: "On 23 May, we announced a further £254 million in funding for buses as part of the Government's efforts to help increase bus services as quickly as possible. This will allow people travelling to hospitals, supermarkets or their place of work to get to their destination safely and quickly, whilst

helping ensure social distancing can be observed. Bus operators *who hold a permit* under section 22 of *the Transport Act 1985* are eligible for this new funding. Operators will be able to claim for reasonable personal protective equipment and safe operation costs, such as hand sanitiser, cleaning vehicles, and installing barriers and screens."

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-06-04/HL5321/>



Notable CT Activities from Around the Country

Moray Coast residents will benefit from a new minibus service which has been launched in the wake of closures of GP surgeries in Hopeman and Burghead due to COVID-19. The Northern Scot reports Hopeman resident Carmen Gillies saying: "We plan to start with the Hopeman minibus and make it available for people from all coastal communities who need to get to appointments at the health centre in Lossiemouth. The minibus will also be available for groups, schoolchildren, and clubs to hire. We plan to expand into a community ride sharing scheme, and perhaps other transport – electric bike hire perhaps. We want to make it possible for people from coastal communities to travel for leisure and necessities along the coast." Anyone interested in being a driver or joining the committee to run the minibus and expand community transport further, should contact Gill Bird of tsiMORAY. Email Gill@tsimoray.org.uk and phone 07935 755234.

<https://www.northern-scot.co.uk/news/moray-villages-start-own-transport-service-205463/>



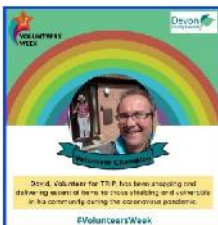
TRIP (Honiton, Devon) has been offering a virtual befriending facility. Lorrie Wilson explained: "We have had such a busy time despite lockdown. We received funding for devices which will help with virtual befriending, offering the ability for which a befriender and befriended to video call each other instead of just chat over the telephone whilst social distancing remains. During lockdown one of our befriendeds and benders have been using video calling not only to stay in touch but to share results of their craft projects with one another. They have both been very busy and the results are amazing. During lockdown we have had a number of new volunteers for befriending as well as new benders who say that the service has made such a difference to them, especially those who have been isolated over the past weeks. We are always on the look-out for new Volunteers and are exceptionally grateful to those who continue to volunteer for us and help change the lives"

<https://www.tripcta.org/newsletter-july-2020/>

Meet some of the TRIP volunteers who gave up their time to help out during the COVID-19 crisis lockdown period:



Caleb & his brother Jai, are two of the youngest of our volunteers, who come in most days to help out wherever & whenever they could.



When my wife asked me what I would be doing for Trip and I replied "shopping", I had to pick her up off the floor she was rolling around laughing so much! She knows how much I hate to go shopping. I am now the master of the aisles!

Being able to help people who are unable to do simple everyday tasks because of Covid 19, gives me a sense of purpose knowing that this small gesture can make a real difference to them. Also, there is a fair amount of good-willed banter in the Trip office which I enjoy!



David Fetcher

Woking Bustler has taken the proactive step of promoting its COVID-19 risk assessment prominently on its website. The thorough 13 page risk assessment was completed in June by Managing Director Guy Padfield-Wilkins and should serve to reassure passengers of the steps that have been taken to minimise risks during travel. Whilst we would always advocate operators working through risk assessments for themselves and not using templates from elsewhere, this is worth looking at.

<https://www.wokingbustler.org.uk/2020/07/woking-community-transport-covid-19-risk-assessment/>



Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation has discontinued its community transport operation. According to the Hertfordshire Mercury the organisation has "announced redundancies and cuts after a 'catastrophic' loss of income." CEO Graham Fisher said "Covid-19 has caused much pain and suffering in the first half of this year, the clinical effects have been devastating and the repercussions on our business and community will be just a great in the second half of 2020... We will need to revise our strategic plan, which we hope to have in place by the end of September. This will set out our new direction and how we can continue to get the most from our unique financial model to make Letchworth a great place to live and work. Even with the continuing shadow of Covid and the dreadful impact it has had on our town, we will come through this as an organisation with a vision and ambition, unity and strength of purpose which has always marked out Letchworth Garden City and its people."

<https://www.hertfordshiremercury.co.uk/news/hertfordshire-news/letchworth-garden-city-heritage-foundation-4305859>



Badenoch & Strathspey Community Transport have been featured in The Press and Journal as part of a profile of how local charities are adapting to new realities, Maggie Lawson MBE, development manager said: "We've never

faced anything like this before, not in our history. We had to think very quickly. So we set up befriending, where a team of volunteers give people a phone. Using the phone is so important, even if we're just asking someone if they're OK for food and prescriptions. Lockdown has had a huge effect on people's mental health, and we know that many people are too frightened to go out. All they've had is phone calls from our volunteers, and they are just so grateful to hear a friendly voice. Now, as families go back to work, there may be even less contact for older people. So we are expecting the requests to build up again...We normally have 180 volunteers, but so many of them are older people who are shielding. This has been an opportunity to call on younger people. We made sure that every child had an Easter egg in Aviemore. People delivered on bikes or walked – it was amazing. I think this pandemic has exposed humanity. The community spirit has totally changed for the better. Each village and town has got a Covid response team, we are all working together. That needs to continue." The experience of Badenoch & Strathspey CT in benefitting from new, younger volunteers is very positive news.

<https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/scotland/2311124/its-good-to-talk-how-north-and-north-east-charities-are-adapting-to-survive-coronavirus-crisis/>



Preston Community Transport made the necessary adjustments to its Mobility Centre to reopen its Shopmobility service from 6 July. This enables users to loan wheelchairs and scooters to get around Preston city centre. New cleaning protocols have been needed for each item of equipment to be cleaned between each hire. A number of Shopmobility services have reopened last week as a wider range of retail outlets have opened their doors again. Preston CT's door-to-door minibus service also recommenced last month.

https://www.facebook.com/pg/prestoncommunitytransport/photos/?ref=page_internal



TAS

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