



**Community
Transport at**

TAS
The TAS Partnership Limited
Passenger Transport Specialists

Community Transport Newsletter No.12 September 2021

TAS has provided expert advice, guidance and support for the CT sector for over 30 years. This general newsletter follows from our well-received COVID-19 coverage between April & September 2020. Please let us know of any items that might be of interest to the wider CT sector.

Revised Guidance on COVID-19 Measures – in Brief

Scotland: from 9 August at Level 0 – social distancing no longer required but face coverings still required on public transport
<https://www.transport.gov.scot/travelling-during-covid-19/guidance-on-the-use-of-face-coverings-on-public-transport-in-scotland/>.

England: from 19 July face coverings are no longer required on public transport but are still recommended. Social distancing restrictions no longer apply apart from certain restricted conditions.
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers#history>

Northern Ireland: from 12 August a one metre distancing is still required on public transport and face covering remains mandatory.

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/safer-travel-guidance-public-transport-users-walkers-cyclists-drivers>

Wales: moved to Level 0 on 11 August but face coverings still required.

<https://gov.wales/travel-and-transport-advice-covid-19#section-39911>

In general CT operators should continue adopt their own policy as a condition of carriage – this can be more stringent but

not more relaxed than the government requirement.



Hampshire County Council's long-serving Community Transport Officer Kevin Ings announces retirement

TAS Director John Taylor writes: A significant 'changing of the guard' is about to occur. One of the country's longest serving local authority community transport officers, Kevin Ings, has announced that he is to retire at the end of this month after 30 years of service with Hampshire County Council. Tens of thousands of minibus drivers and hundreds of thousands of their safe and happy passengers may not be aware that it was Kevin who was primarily responsible in persuading Hampshire CC to fund the development of MiDAS and PATS, and then took on the responsibility of managing the initial and continuing work for what has become such a vitally important tool within the CT sector's advancement nationally.

This is a classic story of 'poacher' turned 'gamekeeper'; Kevin started off his transport involvement with ten years at Eastleigh Council of Community Service [now "One Community"] developing their community transport functions from two rather elderly second-hand donated minibuses into a proper group hire and dial-a-ride service. Following a pilot project using a £4k grant, he managed to extract financial support from the County Council for a 5 day a week service – the first one funded like this in the county. His effective techniques for lobbying council committees earned a certain notoriety amongst council officers.

All this changed when he took on the county's Community Transport Officer function and helped expand and maintain the CT coverage across the whole of the area. His experience as a CT operator provided a combination of empathy underpinned with realism for the local operators seeking council support in their turn. During this period the Council was one of the first to develop a detailed Accessible Transport Strategy covering all modes, and a Community Transport Strategy. Kevin also worked on the Council's development of DRT services, attracting DfT funding for the market-leading Cango services, and then, learning from that experience, a pragmatic mixture of public minibus and shared taxi and private hire car services.

Despite austerity which has impacted significantly over recent years, Hampshire remains one of the better served English counties for CT services including dial-a-rides and a significant car scheme network. One of the more challenging issues that Kevin had to negotiate was an early decision, following advice from the Council's legal and procurement teams, to move from grant aid supported by Service Level Agreements to a system of contracts for community transport services subject to standard competitive tendering. This was achieved without significant disruption and has resulted in greater sector security. The process incorporated early recognition of social value within CT.

Over time Kevin's portfolio expanded to incorporate wider procurement management, concessionary fares, blue badge issue and other functions but he remained hands on with CT. In explaining the Council's successes Kevin has underlined how fortunate he has been to work with really good colleagues. He also considers it to have been a privilege to be paid to undertake work that is enjoyable and rewarding.

One of the benefits of retirement that he has identified is at long last being able to take a holiday during term time as his wife has retired this summer from her full-time teaching role. He will also be able to contribute more to the community as part

of his role in the leadership team in his local church.

Having worked with Kevin on many occasions over the years we recognise his professionalism and commitment to the community's needs and his dedication to detail and to getting value for the public purse. He has been a challenging client to work with (in the best possible way) and the results have been consistently good. We wish him all the very best for his new life.



Review of Traffic Commissioner Role Launched by DfT

Route One: "A review of the Traffic Commissioner (TC) function has been launched by the Department for Transport (DfT). It will consider TCs' roles, delivery model, governance and funding arrangements, as well as current issues that they face, such as the impact of the pandemic and increased workloads. DfT says that the intention of the review is for it to provide 'robust assessment, challenge and assurance on the health and effectiveness' of the TCs and the Office of the Traffic Commissioners (OTC) to ensure that they are fit for the future. Questions relating to many facets of their work are included on the review webpage, but among the specific items to be examined are:

- J Whether the functions that are provided by and in the name of the TCs are required;
- J Whether the TCs are carrying out their functions effectively and efficiently, and whether the support provided by DVSA and OTC allows the TCs to do them;
- J The appropriateness of delivering additional functions.

Industry members, local authorities, trade bodies and passenger groups are among those that have been encouraged to participate in the online consultation. It opened on 11 August and will close on 8 September. The review's recommendations are expected to be published in spring 2022. The relationship between TCs and DVSA features strongly in what the review will examine. In the TCs' annual report for 2020-21, they note that the appointment of Loveday Ryder as DVSA Chief Executive on 1 January 'is already paying dividends,' and that the TCs have signed a new service level agreement with DVSA that commits the Agency 'to improving the service delivered to regulated industries.' Ms Ryder's predecessor at the helm of DVSA, Gareth Llewellyn, launched a scathing and widely derided attack on the TCs in front of the Transport Select Committee on 25 November 2020, describing them as 'anachronistic' and claiming that they were no longer required. Under-Secretary of State for Transport Baroness Vere says that the government intends for the review of the Traffic Commissioner function to be 'thorough' to ensure that 'this important function is as effective as possible.'" <https://www.route-one.net/news/review-of-traffic-commissioner-role-launched-by-dft/>
 Consultation details are here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/review-of-traffic-commissioners-for-great-britain-function/traffic-commissioner-function>



Improving Non-emergency Patient Transport Services: Report of the Non-emergency Patient Transport Review
 Foreword: "For people with a medical or severe mobility need, non-emergency patient transport services (NEPTS) provide an essential means to access the NHS. In some places the services work well. However, there are also too many instances where patients do not receive a sufficiently timely and high-quality journey. These problems are often the consequence of poor

commissioning, uncertainty about eligibility and a lack of information on service activity and performance. NEPTS also constitutes around a fifth of direct NHS travel emissions of carbon dioxide and need to accelerate their transition away from fossil fuels. The development of the new national framework for NEPTS set out in this report provides the foundation for addressing these issues:

- J updated national eligibility criteria;
- J improved wider transport support;
- J greater transparency;
- J a clear path to net zero emissions; and
- J better procurement and contracting.

It provides a basis for greater consistency, while recognising that needs vary from one place to another and services should be tailored to reflect these." The proposed new framework includes the intent to "Support the growth of community transport, particularly volunteer recruitment and integration with transport co-ordination hubs; with innovative approaches developed in three pathfinder areas."

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/improving-non-emergency-patient-transport-services/>

CTA's briefing on the NHS NEPTS report is here:

<https://ctauk.org/briefing-nepts-review/>



NHS to Cover Cost of Travel for Some Patient Groups

National Health Executive: "The NHS in England has announced that kidney dialysis patients will now benefit from free transport to and from vital hospital appointments, under new guidance. This will also make it easier for other vulnerable patients to get free transport, including those with long term conditions and mobility problems.

After a full public consultation period, 21,000 kidney dialysis patients will now be eligible for free transport to hospital appointments. Appropriate transport or the option to claim a refund will be offered to the patient or family when they are referred to hospital, or other NHS premises for specialist NHS treatment or diagnostic tests...It comes after an extensive review looking at non-emergency patient transport services, which help people needing regular hospital care, who can't travel by themselves to important hospital appointments. The patients included are those who have:

-) a medical need for transport, for example because they require oxygen while travelling which needs specialised equipment or support;
-) a cognitive or sensory impairment, where they require the support of patient transport staff or a trained driver;
-) no other suitable transport option given, where their wider mobility or medical needs, and treatment or discharge would be missed or severely delayed.

Data shows that around 11 million patient transport journeys are made every year in England, covering a combined 140 million miles, which is roughly the distance of travelling six times around the earth. It also accounts for around a fifth of direct NHS transport emissions... Caroline Abrahams, Charity Director at Age UK, said: 'Older people have been telling us for some time about how difficult it can be for them to get to and from hospital for clinic appointments and the like, so we were delighted to take part in this NHS England review. Non-emergency patient transport has been something of a Cinderella service for far too long, because when it works well it can make the world of difference to an older person who may otherwise find it unbelievably stressful and tiring accessing hospital services when they need them.' A few of the specific measures announced include:

-) Overhauling the Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme to make it easier for people on a low income to claim back journey costs;
-) A commitment to 100% zero emissions journeys by 2035, except for ambulance journeys and volunteers driving their own cars;

-) The review also outlines ways of making greater use of technology to communicate better with patients and coordinate journeys, expanding the role of community transport and improving accountability, procurement and contracting.

<https://www.nationalhealthexecutive.com/articles/nhs-cover-cost-travel-some-patient-groups>



Scottish Zero Emission Bus Challenge Fund (PHASE 1)

Transport Scotland: "The aim of the ScotZEB Challenge Fund is to support swift, and significant, change in the bus market in favour of zero-emission technologies. This will support the Scottish Government's purpose to create sustainable and inclusive growth. In particular, the fund aims to support the National Outcomes relating to the Economy, the Environment and Fair Work and Business. By supporting the swift transition to zero emission vehicles and infrastructure, the fund will help to achieve targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, contribute to the delivery of Low Emission Zones, encourage inward investment and growth in the supply chain of zero carbon vehicle and energy solutions in Scotland, with associated employment, economic and social benefits. ScotZEB is a new challenge fund focussed on supporting innovative business models designed around the characteristics and opportunities presented by zero emission buses (ZEBs) and associated charging or refuelling infrastructure." The Scottish CT sector should note that eligibility does not exclude minibuses but the main qualifying criteria is "Any party acquiring buses to run on registered local bus services... A registered local bus service is one which is available

to members of the general public, has scheduled stopping places, a clear, easily accessible timetable and route map, and has been registered with the Office of the Traffic Commissioner." This would exclude s19 operators but s22 services would qualify. The funding available for minibus size vehicles is indicated as follows: "The subsidy provided per bus will be no more than the cost difference between the ZEB and its diesel equivalent and no more than £80,000 for a ZEB with at least 9 passenger seats and at least one wheelchair accessible space...[and] 75% of the capital costs for electric charging infrastructure [or] 85% of the capital costs for hydrogen refuelling infrastructure." <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/50206/scotzeb-phase-1-detailed-guidance.pdf>



So Close and yet Still so far for Teme Wheels Electric Vehicle Plan for Tenbury

Ludlow Advertiser: "A final big push is needed to get a Tenbury transport group over the line in its bid to pioneer electric power. Teme Wheels is looking for £43,800 to fulfil its ambition of bringing an electric mini-bus into service. The current funding is £37,000 so there is still a way to go. This is 86 per cent of what is needed and so the goal is almost within touching distance. But time is running out to reach the target and there is now just two weeks to go. There is grant funding available but this depends upon other fund raising reaching a target and there has already been an extension to the time to get the commitments that are needed. The electric vehicle will be a two-year pilot study and take people for medical and other essential purposes. Teme Wheels decided to try to get an electric vehicle in order to follow Government policy. The government has stated that it will not be possible to

purchase new petrol and diesel powered vehicles after 2030. Community Transport currently relies almost entirely on diesel powered vehicles. The project is to acquire and operate a 7/8 seat electric MPV in a rural area for community transport purposes. The MPV will have wheelchair carrying capability and will be used to transport people who do not have easy access to transport and may have disability issues. Destinations will include medical facilities, surgeries, hospitals and essential shopping. One of the other issues that needs to be resolved is to make sure that there is a dedicated electrical charging point. John Driver, a community transport veteran who set up Teme Wheels after many years with the Tenbury Transport Trust, says that because of the limited range of electric vehicles, it is vital that the charity has a dedicated charging point. Funding is supported by Spacehive but matched funding is essential."

<https://www.ludlowadvertiser.co.uk/news/19482466.lose-yet-still-far-teme-wheels-electric-vehicle-plan-tenbury/> See also:

<https://www.ludlowadvertiser.co.uk/news/19544210.going-electric-john-driver-teme-wheels-tenbury-doubts/> and

<https://www.ludlowadvertiser.co.uk/news/19544289.hopes-high-risk-teme-wheels-electric-vehicle-bid-running-road/>



Youth Service Cuts leave Rural Young People 'Exposed to Crime Gangs'

Eastern Daily Press: "Young people in rural areas of Norfolk are at greater risk of criminal exploitation from county lines drug gangs because of a lack of youth services, a report has claimed. The National Youth Agency (NYA) said provision for children and teenagers living in rural villages and coastal areas was 'consistently overlooked' leaving them at risk of loneliness, isolation

and poor mental health. It calls for a government plan to ensure all children and teenagers have access to support regardless of where they live. Leigh Middleton, NYA's chief executive, said: 'We've seen a 75pc cut in services and spending in the last 10 years and what money is left is being focussed into areas where it can reach the most young people and that tends to be our cities and towns. The result of that is if you live in a rural area you are isolated and cut off from access to those services and it makes it so much harder'...The NYA has called for a rural action plan for youth services co-designed with young people and a comprehensive map of youth services and out of school activities in rural areas to be compiled. It also wants to see better community transport options, including minibuses and mobile youth services, and more funding to make better use of community facilities like village halls."

<https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/new-report-slams-youth-services-rural-norfolk-8276194>. See also: <https://www.localgov.co.uk/Over-two-million-young-people-overlooked-in-COVID-recovery/52836>



Heartfelt Tributes to Former Nurse (and Tendring CT Trustee) who had 'Passion for Helping People'

East Anglian Daily Times: "A former nurse who had a 'passion' for helping others and the people in her north Essex hometown has died, aged 67. Gill Elkins was born at Clacton Maternity Home in October 1953 and began training as a nurse at the town's hospital after completing her studies at Pathfields High School. She met her husband, Clive, after he visited the area on one of his regular fishing trips. The couple soon moved to Luton and had three children, with Mrs Elkins later returning to working in healthcare - rising to the position of district nurse before the family

moved back to Clacton in 1987. She was later a care assistant before going to work on the railways, rising through several positions before retiring in the late 1990s. As Mrs Elkins was passionate about where she lived, she was a long-standing secretary of both the Jaywick Sands Forum and Jaywick and Tudor Residents' Association, as well as being on the board of Tendring Community Transport. After being nominated for her work with the Clacton Crime Prevention Panel, Mrs Elkins was made an MBE by the Queen for services to the community in the 2009 New Year Honours. Mrs Elkins lived with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease for many years and passed away from the condition on July 18. She is survived by her husband, children Jody, Hayley and Martin, eight grandchildren and one great-grandchild. Mrs Elkins' funeral was scheduled to take place on August 18 at Weeley Crematorium near Clacton. In a statement, Mrs Elkins' family described her as 'determined and stubborn' and said she was difficult to go out with as she would constantly be stopped by people who knew her. The statement added: The whole family is so proud of her, especially when she got her MBE - Gill did what she did because she has a passion for Jaywick Sands and helping people. Gill had a heart of gold - the kettle was always on and if anyone had a problem they went to Gill and she would always help you. She didn't judge you, or care who you were or where you were from, you were a person to her."

<https://www.eadt.co.uk/news/clacton-nurse-gill-elkins-obituary-8227462>



Fundraising Drive in aid of Community Bus in Teesdale

Teesdale Mercury: "Fundraising efforts for a community bus for Staindrop have stepped up a gear with the launch of a village raffle. Spearheaded by former pub landlord Morris Race, the aim is to have a vehicle insured for any driver so that groups such as the Scouts or Women's Institute can hire the bus at a nominal fee for outings. Volunteer drivers will also take people on shopping trips or to attend medical appointments. A three-day beer and music festival is also planned to help raise funds for the venture. The raffle was given impetus with support from Tesco supermarket community champion John Bailey who offered a £100 prize as well as bottles of wine. He said: 'I think it is a brilliant idea. When I was a member of Durham County Council we used to have a community bus and it was very helpful, especially for elderly people to get them to appointments and to go shopping.' Mr Race said the only obstacle towards further fundraising is organising a bank account for the group. While the initial proposal to start a community transport scheme began early last year, it was put on hold when the coronavirus lockdown was imposed and an appointment to open a bank account was cancelled. Mr Race said: 'We had an appointment last week but the girl had to go off because of self-isolation. The only delay is opening the bank account, once we have that I can approach Teesdale Action Partnership and the county councillors [for a grant].' All cash collected at the village Post Office prior to the lockdown can also be banked, he added. Mr Race said: 'The support has been fantastic.' Volunteers Ben and Gill Johnson will be going door-to-door through the village with raffle tickets, but anyone who is missed can buy tickets at the Post Office or Simon's Butchers. Preparations for the beer festival, which starts on Friday, September 3, at the Masonic Hall, are well underway and the group has already received sponsorship for beer mugs from James Priestley and Simon's Butchers. Any other businesses interested in sponsoring can contact Mr Race on 07983 102041."

<https://www.teesdalemercury.co.uk/news/fundraising-drive-in-aid-of-community-bus>



Hampshire Travel for All Project Love Andover: "Hampshire County Council (HCC) would like to support residents to reduce loneliness and isolation as some older residents (aged 65+) may currently be finding it difficult to stay connected due to difficulties using public transport. They understand that the impacts of the COVID19 pandemic have left some residents with reservations in using public transport again and some residents may have only stopped shielding within the last few months. This has resulted in poorer activity levels, lack of access to key services and a decline in their mental health. The project aims to make the best use of public transport opportunities to support older residents in the Andover and the Waterside area of the New Forest, to travel around Hampshire with greater ease, to broaden their travel horizons, to increase their travel confidence and to engage with the community. Key aims are to assist residents to make journeys they would have otherwise not made independently via public transport and gain useful feedback to review and develop local transport services. The project also hopes to reinvigorate the local economy and links to the community by highlighting opportunities to visit local shops and town centres and helping residents rediscover nearby social opportunities. Through the Travel for All project, we want to support residents aged 65+ in Hampshire by identifying and addressing barriers to using public transport services, to get people active and to connect with their community and key services...Volunteers would be directly engaging with vulnerable adults and will receive bespoke training. (This is envisaged to be of a virtual nature – we will endeavour to deliver face-to-face sessions only if it is safe to do so). Activities would

require some independent engagement with residents, with support and guidance from project coordinators that will support the key project aims mentioned above.

Volunteers will contact people who have been referred to the service, to arrange to meet them to help find out more about what social activities they are interested in and plan how they could get to them using public and community transport. This will involve listening to their needs, identifying what difficulties they may face in travelling and helping them find suitable routes and services...This project has been commissioned by HCC and South Western Railway (SWR). Atkins is a multinational design, engineering, and project management consultancy, that will deliver this project on behalf of HCC and SWR." <https://loveandover.com/news/local-news/hampshire-travel-for-all-project/>



Arfon MS Siân Gwenllïan helps open Ogwen Valley community venture

North Wales Chronicle: "The hub of a new project tackling community issues in the Ogwen Valley was officially opened by Arfon MS Siân Gwenllïan on Friday. The MS was joined in cutting the ribbon at 27 High Street, Bethesda, by her Westminster counterpart Hywel Williams MP on Friday, calling the new Dyffryn Gwyrdd project 'the multifaceted approach that Wales needs.' The hub will act as an information centre as the venture focuses on issues such as transport poverty, littering, and rural loneliness. It is the latest project of Partneriaeth Ogwen, and was supported by a National Lottery Community Fund grant. She added: 'The Dyffryn Gwyrdd project addresses a host of issues facing the local community, doing so in a sustainable and green way that reaps rewards for the community. It shows the

endless possibilities when communities come together for the benefit of local people. This great resource, right in the middle of Bethesda is just one example of the commendable work of Partneriaeth Ogwen. Communities like those in the Ogwen Valley face major challenges, but as they did during the pandemic, the communities have come together to establish something special.

It's particularly good to see the emphasis on acting within the greater context of the climate crisis, whether it be through the efforts to become a plastic-free community, the litter picks, or the planting of 200 oak trees. It was a genuine pleasure to officially open the hub in Bethesda, and I look forward to seeing Dyffryn Gwyrdd's work going from strength to strength."

Partneriaeth Ogwen was set up in 2013 as a partnership between three community councils with the aim of working collaboratively across the valley. Among Dyffryn Gwyrdd's priorities is addressing 'rural transport poverty,' an issue affecting those who cannot afford or access travel. They intend to set up a green community transport scheme, providing electric vehicles and developing a fleet of electric bikes, and hope the numerous volunteering opportunities provided will also tackle loneliness, provide people with skills, and create jobs. Working alongside Cyd Ynni and the new GwyrddNi project, the hub will provide advice for people to tackle fuel poverty. So far, Dyffryn Gwyrdd's work has led to having a community-owned electric car for use by residents, a community workshop that repairs bikes and gives people an opportunity to try electric bicycles, and the planting of community gardens. The electric car has been used as part of the Community Buddy Scheme, to ensure that 25 meals-on-wheels are delivered weekly. Huw Davies, Dyffryn Gwyrdd's manager, thanked the Lottery and all other supporters and partners who have enabled us to provide this new service. He said: 'The hub will be a centre where people can pop by for information and advice about resources and services - everything from using our electric vehicle for attending hospital appointments, learning how to convert a bike to an electric one, to information on green volunteering opportunities and planting and growing food locally.' Cllr Paul Rowlinson, who

represents a part of the Ogwen Valley on Gwynedd Council and helped to establish Dyffryn Gwyrdd, added: 'It's great to see the Dyffryn Gwyrdd office officially opening. This exciting project has been set up with the aim of establishing a truly green community in Dyffryn Ogwen. The project will bring people together, provide opportunities to learn new skills and find jobs, help people heat their homes more efficiently and grow more food. This convenient High Street centre will be an opportunity for everyone to pop in to witness the excitement.'

<https://www.northwaleschronicle.co.uk/news/19479933-arfon-ms-sian-gwenllian-helps-open-ogwen-valley-community-venture/>



Transport to Health Project Launches in Wales

Business News Wales: "A new community-based transport project has launched in Wales. 'Transport to Health' has been set up to support transport to hospitals and other NHS premises across the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board area. Business News Wales sat down with Faye Mear, the Regional Community Transport Coordinator, who said: 'The Health Board identified that in some areas, they have poor public transport provision. It's quite fragmented and if someone has support needs, that can be quite difficult to access.' She added that the project has had 'a lot of initial interest' and there have been a several providers who are 'very excited to put in an application to further develop something for their community.' Since Monday 19th July 2021, Transport providers have been able to apply for grant funding available through the 'Transport to Health' project, to support the growth and development of accessible and inclusive transport. This funding is available to existing community transport

enterprises, to support the development of new patient transport schemes and to encourage new partnerships within the sector. Community transport will be beneficial for residents who need to access healthcare sites for appointments, or to visit loved ones."

<https://businessnewswales.com/transport-to-health-project-launches-in-wales/>

Applications for up to £10,000 are being processed by GAVO – details here:

<https://www.gavo.org.uk/t2h>



The Transport to Health Project

What It's About

The Transport to Health project has been set up to support community transport across the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board area (Flintshire, Gwent, Carmarthenshire, Monmouthshire, Newport, South Wales, and Torfaen).

It has been identified that there are areas where public transport provision is fragmented. This can mean long and difficult journeys to major health settings which is inconvenient at best, but presents real barriers to residents with additional support needs, low incomes or who live in an isolated location. There has been recognition that community transport could be hugely beneficial in helping these residents access health settings for appointments or to visit loved ones.



'No Plans' for direct Caerphilly to Grange Hospital link

South Wales Argus: "There are no plans for a direct public transport link between Caerphilly County Borough and the Grange University Hospital, it has been confirmed. The new hospital run by the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board opened near Cwmbran last year. But Caerphilly residents travelling by bus to the site currently have to go via Newport. And the health board has confirmed it has no plans to set up a direct link. The health board has previously said most patients are taken to the Grange in an ambulance because the hospital treats seriously ill patients and those with significant injuries. Hefin David, Senedd Member for Caerphilly, said it is 'very important' that all hospitals can be accessed via public transport. 'The Grange is used for critical care cases, which means many people attending will be seriously ill or in an emergency situation, so will likely be taken by ambulance,' he said. 'Nevertheless, it is very important that all hospitals can be accessed by public transport. However, this is a wider issue and is not only the responsibility of the health board. The health board is currently conducting

research into community transport to identify where the support is needed. They should continue to work alongside public transport services and local authorities to secure a service for residents in Caerphilly. I will also continue to work with Transport for Wales and the health board to establish how this can be achieved.' The Welsh Government and Transport for Wales declined to comment on whether they were considering establishing a direct link. Independent councillor Kevin Etheridge, who represents the Blackwood ward, said: 'I am most concerned to read there is no offer of additional routes for Caerphilly County Borough residents to the new Grange Hospital. There are no services from Blackwood unless it involves changes and hours of travel.' Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations (GAVO), which is funded by the health board, is currently undertaking a 'Transport for Health' public survey to find out how to best serve residents in the borough. The online survey will allow residents to have their say on community transport to health appointments and hospitals. The project was set up to support community transport across the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board area, which includes Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent, Monmouthshire, Newport, Torfaen, and the southern part of Powys. The Transport for Health survey can be found here:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfMBAeqadtXf2ex4-dsdYMVAPKdzAh-pYv05_vKpDi6ZmckQ/viewform.
<https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/19525298.n-o-plans-direct-caerphilly-grange-hospital-link/>



Forres Community Service the Osprey Bus Needs Bookings and Volunteers

Forres Gazette: "A free community transport service is ready for more bookings as the country returns to 'the new normal'. The Osprey Bus, founded in 1973 to provide free transport to the elderly, infirm and disabled, as well as children, is now using Forres Area Community Trust (FACT) for bookings and a Covid cleaning kit, including a plug-in fogger, to make the bus safe to use. Trust chairman, Shaun Moat, confirmed the vehicle has 12 seats plus room for a wheelchair user. He said: 'We would like it to be used more. It doesn't need to be a weekly booking – it might just be a one-off such as when we supported Dyke Primary School with their end of year trip to bowling in Elgin.' More recently, the bus has been used to transport young people to Forres Nairn and District Riding for the Disabled at Burgie. 'As we have a section 19 permit, we can't hire the vehicle out,' said Shaun. 'It can only be used by groups that fit the charity's purpose and is operated on a recommended donation of 50p per mile.' There are currently around 16 available volunteer drivers. 'We need more people to come forward,' said Shaun. 'They don't need to have minibuses on their licence and full training is provided before driving the bus. We are also looking for more people to come onto the board of trustees. We need people to help with finance, marketing, fundraising etc. The more people we have on the board, the better the ideas and services we can offer. We currently meet bi-monthly via Zoom.' The Osprey Bus is maintained by Wilmac Garage on the Greshop Industrial Estate and kept in a garage at the back of Forres House Community Centre. Shaun said: 'Wilmac only charge us for parts and donate any necessary labour time. This saves us a lot of money. Booking is via FACT – one point of contact is easier for management.' The bus can be booked by calling 01309 674 388 or by emailing info@forresarea.org marking the email Osprey Bus Booking. FACT development manager Debbie Herron confirmed someone will reply with confirmation. She said: 'During lockdown, the bus was used by FACT and Moray Food Plus to distribute food and supplies across the area to those who were shielding or vulnerable. Our aim is to make it easier for people to book now. Following on from this pilot we are hoping that people will be

able to see its availability online in due course.' Anyone interested in becoming a volunteer driver or joining the Osprey board should email shaun@forresospreybus.co.uk. More information is available at www.forresospreybus.co.uk and the Osprey Bus Facebook page. <https://www.forres-gazette.co.uk/news/help-the-osprey-spread-its-wings-247097/>



Help Improve Mansfield Community Transport Scheme

Chad: "A Mansfield resident is urging as many elderly and disabled residents in the area to complete a survey and have their say, to help a community transport operator develop plans to improve transport in the area following the success of a pilot project. Paul Allen, 67, from the Bellamy Road Estate has used the service, which was funded as part of the Community Champions Project, to get to and from appointments and now wants the service to continue, to help more people travel around Mansfield. He said: 'I suffer from a number of health issues which makes moving around very difficult, so this service has been a lifeline to me.' Ian Combellack, managing director, said: 'We are seeking views from anyone in the area who would like to see improvements to transport. In particular, we're keen to hear from the elderly and people with disabilities, as well as community and voluntary groups.'

The survey is being organised by CT4N Charitable Trust, a charity that specialises in providing transport for older people and those with disabilities. Paul said: 'The staff are fantastic and very friendly and helpful. I really hope that CT4N continue with the work they are doing in Mansfield, as we do not have a lot of transport which is accessible for people like me who struggle

on public transport.' As well as providing transport for the elderly and people with disabilities, community transport schemes can also help community and voluntary groups to get out and about, by providing access to affordable minibuses. Elaine Allitt, CT4N's charity co-ordinator, said. 'We know that some people may want to participate in the survey, but don't have access to a computer, so we're more than happy to receive feedback over the phone.'

<https://www.chad.co.uk/news/people/help-improve-mansfield-community-transport-scheme-3336699>



Transport Group to Hold Annual Meeting in Great Yarmouth

Great Yarmouth Mercury: "A community transport and travel group will be holding its annual meeting next week in Great Yarmouth. East Norfolk Transport Users Association (ENTUA), which deals with liaising with local transport companies, will meet in public on Wednesday, August 11 at Christchurch at 2.15pm. This year's meeting will focus on rail links in the area, as well as discussing bus routes around Great Yarmouth once the new bridge has been built. ENTUA began almost 40 years ago, then operating under the name of the East Norfolk Travellers Association. Steve Hewitt, a volunteer with ENTUA, said: "Basically, we're a go between for the user and the transport provider." The association publishes a quarterly newsletter regarding local transport issues, changes and information. Mr Hewitt added: 'Everyone is welcome, whether you are a member or not.' For more details, visit their website www.entua.org.uk."

<https://www.greatyarmouthmercury.co.uk/news/traffic/east-norfolk-transport-users-association-agm-great-yarmouth-8200678>



Sutherland Scores out of Last Round of Beatrice Partnership Fund

The Northern Times: "The lion's share of funding for the Highlands from the last round of the Beatrice Partnership Fund has gone to groups serving Sutherland... Creich, Croick and Kincardine District Day Care Association has gained £26,090 to fund a community transport initiative. Dornoch Beach Wheelchairs has been given £20,859 to purchase an electric all-terrain wheelchair and install an electricity supply in its beach shed to charge it. It will be the first all-terrain vehicle in the Highlands.

The £3 million fund, set up by Beatrice Offshore Wind Farm owners, has benefited groups on the east coast of Caithness and Sutherland as well as the coastal communities of Moray since it started in 2017."

<https://www.northern-times.co.uk/news/sutherland-scores-out-of-last-round-of-beatrice-partnership-247541/>



Last Day of Food Deliveries at Ealing CT

Twitter: "An extraordinary achievement delivering close to 30,000 food parcels. Massive respect to Piotr and his ECT team on the last day of deliveries yesterday. Fantastic achievement by all involved."

https://twitter.com/ECT_Charity/status/1420311318205190145



Expanding Community Transport Scheme Appeals for more Drivers in Llangollen

Denbighshire Free Press: "A successful Denbighshire community transport scheme is appealing for volunteer drivers as it continues its expansion into Llangollen. South Denbighshire Community Partnership's not-for-profit scheme is travelling further afield as it helps elderly and vulnerable people to get out and about. As part of an exciting £500,000 three-year initiative SDCP has extended its services along the Dee Valley to Llangollen and its surrounding villages from its base in Corwen. The partnership's social inclusion services include a dial-a-ride facility, luncheon club, meals-on-wheels, leisure excursions and shopping trips. But a bigger area means more drivers are needed to keep the charity's fleet of six grant-funded vehicles busy so it has launched an appeal for volunteers to join the loyal pool of 18 drivers who donate their time each week. South Denbighshire Community Partnership transport co-ordinator for Corwen and Llangollen Maggie Harding said: 'All our drivers are volunteers and they are our lifblood. Without them generously giving up their time we wouldn't be able to run any services. As of now we have 18 volunteers but five operate the daily meals on wheels and only six of our pool have the documentation to drive the minibus. Now we've a larger area to cover we really need more volunteers to help us reach people in outlying villages with limited transport. If anyone has a couple of hours to spare on a morning or afternoon any day of the week, we'd love to hear from them. The more drivers we're able to call on, the more comprehensive services we can offer across our bigger area.' Anyone interested in being a volunteer driver can call Maggie on 01490 266004. Maggie added: 'Many service users

live in rural locations where public transport is not a viable option for them to attend local events, social gatherings or even get to clinic and hospital appointments. It's our mission to get them where they need to be via as smooth-running an operation as possible. It's our aim to reduce social isolation among community members who struggle to get out and assist them to participate fully in community activities. 'SDCP say there has never been a greater need for the service which has adapted to continue its service even at the height of lockdown. Pre-pandemic, drivers ferried people to destinations in dedicated vehicles, but in lockdown they couldn't take passengers so they delivered prescriptions, shopping and activity packs instead. Bob Jaques became a driver just before the pandemic struck. He said: 'Many of our usual activities had to be stopped due to social distancing but we managed to adapt. I and several other drivers would pick up and deliver prescriptions for people using our own cars. We'd drop them off ensuring there was the required distance between us and each recipient.' Now Bob is happy to be back driving people around in the community fleet and he said: 'I recently took out a lady in a wheelchair with her daughter carer. She'd been shielding for 16 months unable to go anywhere. It was quite emotional seeing their delight at finally getting out. That's why we became volunteers – to bring people together, help them overcome mobility issues and let them know they're all valued members of our community.' Maggie said take up of Meals on Wheels soared during lockdown as the Luncheon Club in Canolfan Ni, Corwen, had to close and they have delivered 4,000 meals in the Corwen area since the start of lockdown.' Services are returning as pandemic restrictions ease though some social distancing measures remain. The Luncheon Club is back up and running but wider spacing of tables means it can only cater for 15 diners instead of the pre-pandemic 40 while the 14-seater mini-bus is only carrying a maximum of seven people. Tom Taylor, SDCP Strategic Implementation Officer, said: 'Our entire organisation pulled together to inject flexibility into our usual operations. We continued to communicate with users and provide the most assistance possible even at the peak of lockdown. The fact that we're

now extending our boundaries into Llangollen is another big achievement which we're all very excited about.' They have adopted dial-a-ride from the Rotary Club in Dee Valley and he said: 'This is a lifeline for many residents particularly in outlying villages so we absorbed it and are working hard to provide a comprehensive service for all those who need it in both areas. More volunteer drivers would help us meet every user's needs but meantime it's all hands to the pump to minimise social isolation and make sure the vulnerable know we're here for them.' The Llangollen area merger means the community transport scheme acquired an extra vehicle, a smart wheelchair-accessible Vauxhall Caddy. Maggie said: 'It's named Brian after Brian Evans, the Rotarian who inspired Rotary to establish the dial-a-ride service in Llangollen. We aim to get it made-over like our others into South Denbighshire Community Partnership livery... The Community Transport Scheme's services are now well established in the Edeyrnion area covering Corwen and the villages of Cynwyd, Carrog, Llandrillo, Lliidiart y Parc, Glyndyfrdwy, Betws Gwerfyl Goch, Melin y Wig, Gwyddelwern and Brynegwlys. Now the scheme has pushed further into Dee Valley it also covers Llangollen and neighbouring villages of Pentredwr, Pengwern, Eglwyseg, Llantysilio and Rhewl. For more information about the scheme and South Denbighshire Community Partnership services call 01490 266 004, visit www.canolfan-ni.org or email: office@sdcp.org." <https://www.denbighshirefreepress.co.uk/news/19486365.expanding-community-transport-scheme-appeals-drivers-llangollen/>



Cross-government Effort to Transform Disabled People's Everyday Lives

The Government's National Disability Strategy objectives have been prioritised for delivery on a multi-departmental basis.

DfT commits to:

-) enable disabled people to travel with confidence by addressing staff training, information and the attitudes and behaviours of others;
-) improve the accessibility and safety of the rail network;
-) improve the accessibility of buses, bus stations and bus stops;
-) tackle shortages in community transport drivers;
-) improve accessibility of taxis and private hire vehicles;
-) make 'life line' ports more accessible and
-) create new accessibility standards for electric vehicle charging points.

Chris Heaton-Harris MP has been named Ministerial Disability Champion for DfT.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-disability-strategy/part-3-a-cross-government-effort-to-transform-disabled-peoples-everyday-lives>



Tenbury Transport Celebrates after Winning Two Awards

Press release: "A transport charity serving the communities of parts of Worcestershire, Shropshire and Herefordshire is celebrating after winning two awards. The Tenbury Transport Trust has won the Best Community Transport Charity - West Midlands award at the Acquisition International Magazine's 2021 Non-Profit Organisation Awards. And in a double success, the trust also collected the Local Charity Award Judges' Choice at the Pride of Malvern Hills Community Awards 2020 - an awards ceremony delayed for 12 months due to Covid. The

trust, based in Tenbury Wells, has served the local community for more than 10 years, providing a safe, professional, service for people who don't have adequate transport of their own. Nominations for the Acquisition International Magazine awards are made in several ways, including through the magazine's online nomination form from magazine subscribers, its online visitors and social media following.

Judges make their decision based on the nominee's client dedication, innovation, business growth, longevity, online reputation, client feedback and business performance. An awards spokesman said: 'After weeks of careful consideration by our judging panel and research team, I am delighted to confirm that Tenbury Transport Trust has been awarded: Best Community Transport Charity - West Midlands in the 2021 Non-Profit Organisation Awards. Congratulations on this fabulous

achievement! I hope this accolade demonstrates how valued your contribution to the non-profit organisation industry is by Acquisition International Magazine and that you might take a moment to celebrate your efforts.' The Pride of Malvern Hills

Community Awards were launched by Malvern Hills District Council to highlight the work of unsung heroes by recognising dedicated members of the community who have improved the lives and wellbeing of residents. Judges make their decisions based on nominations from the public for individuals, organisations or projects. The trust's award was received by Mrs Angela Brinton, Patron of Tenbury Transport Trust. Wendy White, Chair of trustees at Tenbury Transport Trust, said: 'We are delighted to have won these awards - they recognise the important role we are continuing to play in providing a much valued service to those in our community who are experiencing transport difficulties. Our drivers and office staff are integral to the success of the trust and fulfilling our commitment to helping people meet their transport needs. We are living in a rural community where people often don't have access to their own transport and rely on others to help them get out and about, go shopping and be able to attend appointments. For further information about Tenbury Transport Trust, how to volunteer or become a client, visit <http://www.tttrust.org.uk/>, call 01584

819452 or pop in and see the team at the office in Teme Street Tenbury Wells."



Epping Forest & Harlow Community Transport Volunteer Appeal

Epping Forest Guardian: "A community bus scheme for people living in rural areas of Epping and Harlow is back up and running after nearly a year of offering an adapted service -and is appealing for volunteers. The charity, Epping Forest & Harlow Community Transport (EHCT), helps local people who are unable to use conventional public transport, including the elderly, those who are disabled or people who are rurally isolated. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic their fleet of 18 mini-buses made around 8,000 door-to-door service journeys each month, but they had to adapt their offering in March 2020 when the country went into lockdown. Manager Angela Canham said: 'Although we were unable to operate as usual, we knew that our clients still needed our support. We applied for a grant from Essex Community Foundation and were awarded £13,175 from their Essex Coronavirus Response and Recovery Programme, which meant we could buy the equipment needed for some of our team to work from home. They made daily calls to our housebound passengers to provide them with some reassurance that they weren't alone and help prevent them from feeling isolated.' The charity also made trips to St Margaret's Hospital in Epping and worked with NHS Princess Alexander Hospital in Harlow to deliver medications to patients who had gone home after being treated for Coronavirus,

or those with serious underlying health conditions who needed to self-isolate. Ms Canham added: 'The funding we received also meant that we could add safety screens in our mini-buses for when restrictions eased. Like many charities, our income and donations reduced, but the need for our services grew. We are so grateful to ECF and their fundholders who decided to support us. It helped us get through a very challenging time and kept us going.' Andy Payne Worpole, head of programmes at Essex Community Foundation, said: 'Community transport services like EHCT provide a lifeline to people who are elderly or disabled, especially those who live in rural communities where there is a limited or no bus service at all. Knowing they can attend an appointment, meet friends or simply do some shopping, is so important as it helps keep them connected to their community and reduces feelings of isolation.' EHCT is recruiting for new volunteers to help meet renewed demand for its services. To discuss the available positions, please call 01992 579556 or e-mail:

efct@efcommunitytransport.org.uk.
<https://www.eppingforestguardian.co.uk/news/19504536.epping-forest-harlow-community-transport-volunteer-appeal/>



Bus Funded by HS2 is Proving a Big Hit with Residents of a Banburyshire Village

Banbury Guardian: "A community bus, paid for by HS2, is proving to be a big hit with villagers of Greatworth. The 16-seater minibus is being leased for three years using £75,000 from the HS2 Community and Environment Fund to provide transport while construction work takes place alongside the village. Villagers have

already started to make use of it and a service to Brackley is underway. A very successful trip to Buckingham was made last week. Clubs and community organisations have also started to use the minibus and so too has the village school. There is so much demand that extra volunteer drivers are being trained through the Greatworth Community Transport Association, which is run entirely by volunteers. The bus will be used by all age groups and also for the disabled. It has lift access for wheelchair users. Association spokesman Richard Edwards said: 'The minibus will help the village community through a difficult period when the HS2 construction work necessitates the closure of a main access road into the village for a considerable time. Greatworth has no bus service so the minibus will be of practical help to our residents and make them feel less isolated during the major part of the construction work. It has taken an awful lot of time and effort by the trustees of the Greatworth Community Transport Association to achieve what we have. I must say we are all delighted because this is a project by people of Greatworth for the people of Greatworth.'"

<https://www.banburyguardian.co.uk/news/people/bus-funded-by-hs2-is-proving-a-big-hit-with-residents-of-a-banburyshire-village-3341977>



Buses go the Extra Mile to Hunstanton

Lynn News: "Lynn-based bus operator, Go To Town, is launching a new service linking villages in West Norfolk directly with Hunstanton for the first time. From Wednesday, passengers on the Go To Town number 21 service will be able to continue their journey beyond Docking, where the bus had previously terminated, to Hunstanton town centre. Go To Town general manager, Fiona Matchett, said

'We have listened to feedback from our passengers and it was clear that a service to Hunstanton running through the villages was a much-needed addition. We are delighted to also be able to run this on Sundays, so passengers will have access to the beautiful West Norfolk Coast, and beyond, seven days a week. And by leaving their car at home and travelling on one of our low-emissions buses they will help to reduce pollution in the local area.' Peter Brown, managing director of West Norfolk Community Transport added: 'This is an important new transport link between a number of West Norfolk villages and Hunstanton, many of which are remote and have never had a direct link to their nearest town. We hope our new service will help people in these rural areas who rely on public transport, as well as providing another option to those who would prefer to relax on the journey and not have to worry about parking or getting stuck in traffic jams in their cars.' To celebrate the launch of the new service, Go To Town is offering a 'Summer Holiday Special' price of just £10 for a family return to Hunstanton, valid when starting from any of the villages on the number 21 service route. Go To Town, operated by West Norfolk Community Transport Project Ltd, has invested over £1million to develop local public transport, including a fleet low emission buses. The company provides connections throughout West Norfolk linking villages with the towns of Lynn, Downham, Wisbech, Swaffham, Fakenham and now Hunstanton, in addition to their urban and rural Dial-A-Bus, volunteer driver services and Shopmobility, all of which are specialised services for those who are not able to access regular public service transport. More information and timetables can be found by visiting www.gtt-online.co.uk or by calling 01553 776971."

<https://www.lynnnews.co.uk/news/go-to-town-bus-company-extends-route-next-week-9209497/>



Police Appeal after Elderly Bus Passengers Injured in Accident
 Isle of Wight County Press: "Two elderly bus passengers were injured in an accident yesterday and the police are seeking witnesses. The accident happened at Culver Parade in Sandown at around 12.30pm on Thursday. A Hampshire Constabulary spokesperson said: 'We are appealing for witnesses following a road traffic incident in Culver Parade, Sandown. The incident happened around 12.30pm yesterday (12 August) near The Bandstand restaurant and involved a blue community transport bus [Southern Vectis]. Two passengers on board were injured and taken to hospital. An 81-year-old woman had minor injuries and was later discharged, and an 86-year-old woman sustained serious injuries and remains in hospital. Were you in the area at the time? Perhaps you saw the blue bus in the run-up to the incident or maybe you have dash-cam footage? Anyone with information can contact us online or by calling 101 quoting 44210320816. Alternatively, you can contact the Crimestoppers charity anonymously on 0800 555 111.'"

<https://www.countypress.co.uk/news/19513125.police-appeal-elderly-bus-passengers-injured-accident/>

Also reported here:

<https://www.islandecho.co.uk/appeal-launched-after-86-year-old-suffers-serious-injuries-in-collision/>



Volunteers Sought as Ilkley Community Transport's Buses are Back in Business

Ilkley Gazette: "Ilkley Community Transport's distinctive blue buses, which were parked up during lockdown, are back on the road again and an appeal has been issued for volunteers to help with the popular service. The fleet of three buses – two 16-seaters and one that can carry 11 passengers – will once again be transporting charitable groups and local residents to their chosen destinations. The journeys typically undertaken include trips to the theatre, visits to museums and stately homes, excursions to the Dales and other outings ranging from an hour to a full day trip. Given some notice the buses can also be easily adapted to accommodate wheelchair passengers. 'We're absolutely delighted to be back in business after this period of inactivity and are very much looking forward to providing transport help once again for people in the area,' said John Barker, Chair of Ilkley Community Transport. 'To help us ensure a good service we are currently looking for new volunteers to join our friendly team, and have vacancies for minibus drivers, minibus escorts, volunteer car drivers and also people to provide administration assistance in our office. We would love to hear from anyone who is interested in working with us in what can be a really worthwhile and rewarding area. And anyone who volunteers can devote as little or as much time as they wish to the job. Regarding qualifications, a minibus driver will be required to have Group D1 on his or her licence, and will be trained by us to the MiDAS (Minibus Drivers Awareness Scheme) standard.' In addition, Ilkley Community Transport also operates a car lift scheme, with volunteer drivers using their own vehicles. The service is primarily for medical appointments and covers the LS29 post code area – i.e. Ilkley, Addingham, Burley in Wharfedale, Burley Woodhead and Menston. There is no charge for this service but any donations are gratefully received. Car drivers will be able to charge agreed fuel expenses and their insurance should permit them to carry passengers in a voluntary capacity without affecting their annual premium. 'Apart from requiring drivers we also need some help in our office, which we share with Community Action Bradford and District ' added John. 'Our transport co-ordinator oversees the group's activities,

but assistance would be appreciated with everyday tasks such as handling telephone enquiries, taking bookings and car lift requests, and liaising with drivers and escorts. Again, it's simply as much time as you feel you can give.' To book a bus and check hire rates, or find out more about volunteering, contact the office on 01943 603348 or e-mail info@ilkleycommunitytransport.org.uk. "<https://www.ilkleygazette.co.uk/news/19518571.volunteers-sought-ilkley-community-transport-buses-back-business/>



Easilink Add Routes

Derry Journal: "Easilink Community Transport has added a fully accessible nine seater bus to its fleet. The new service aims to accommodate residents living in rural areas such as Omagh and Strabane. Easilink say that the minibus will help navigate and safely deliver the Rural Links to Health and Wellbeing project. The Rural Links to Health and Wellbeing project is a five-year plan which was established in August 2019. The aim of this project is to provide a door to door transport system and to help those who do not have access to public transport or a private vehicle in order to attend hospital appointments. Project coordinator Kerrie Grugan says they are 'delighted' to have received the additional funding. 'The Rural Links to Health and Wellbeing Project enables previously unavailable travel options for our service users,' she said. 'It addresses the issue of access to hospital and health related appointments for people living in Omagh, Strabane and rural Derry / Londonderry. With the support of the minibus and our volunteer car scheme, we will be able to deliver the Rural Links project effectively to help ensure health appointments are not missed because of transport issues.' Sustainable transport

grants available for Derby businesses Claire Russell is the Chief Executive of Easilink Community Transport, she says the new minibus is 'very much welcomed. We have been seeing an increase in the number of vulnerable passengers needing to use a wheelchair to avoid direct personal contact with our drivers,' she said. 'It will go a long way in helping to ensure our local people can access hospital and health appointments in Western Trust areas.' Northern Ireland Director of The National Lottery Community Fund, Kate Beggs said: 'We're delighted to support this project which is providing essential transport for people to make it easier for them to access vital health services.'" <https://www.derryjournal.com/lifestyle/outdoors/easilink-add-routes-3349302>



MP Unveils FACT Community Transport Community Fridge
Cambs Times: "MP Steve Barclay has visited a community hub in March for the opening of the town's first community fridge. The FACT community fridge, which is located at the group's community hub on Martin Avenue, is one of 100 new Co-op funded fridges opening this year with environmental charity Hubbub. Chairman of FACT Gary Christy, FACT Community Hub Organiser Nicola Christy and Co-op Member Pioneer Manager Steve Thomas were also present for the unveiling. FACT Community Transport, supported by Hubbub, are working in a new partnership with Co-op to fast-track the expansion of Hubbub's community fridge network across the UK. The new fridges are expected to save 6.8 million meals per year from going to waste. FACT will welcome donations of

unopened, packaged foods within their use by date and raw fruit or vegetables which will be available for anyone in the community to take. The fridge in March will be open from 10am until 12pm every Monday and Friday. Nicola Christy, Community Hub Organiser at FACT, said: 'Community fridges are a wonderful concept and we're delighted to host the first for March. All our visitors are welcome to get involved, by giving or receiving food or by coming along to learn about our work on a new garden area. We're going to be growing our own fruit and vegetables for the local community.' Community fridges are open to everyone, without any need to be referred or having to prove eligibility to access fresh food that would have otherwise gone to waste. The food is donated by businesses, with Co-op donating surplus food from its stores. The fridges also empower communities to connect with each other and learn new skills through activities such as cookery sessions. MP Steve Barclay, said: 'It was great to see our community coming together to help people develop skills such as cooking and growing their own fruit and veg. I am hugely grateful to Gary and Nicola at FACT and Steve from the Co-op, and their teams for all their hard work on a great initiative. It will bring a practical benefit across the community.'

<https://www.cambstimes.co.uk/news/business/steve-barclay-opens-new-community-fridge-in-march-8268450>



Green CT and Shopmobility Work Together in Yate to aid Mobility Needs

Gloucestershire Gazette Series: "Two Yate-based companies aiding members in the community are combining their efforts to support each other after one received a grant from local council. Green Community Travel and Shopmobility have worked together for years with GCT enables people to access Shopmobility that

is based in Yate Library meaning that people can use a mobility scooter to access the local shopping centre. Both are services that aim to reduce social isolation and loneliness and give people independence and make sure they can access their local community. Recently Shopmobility were awarded a grant from OneYou South Gloucestershire to cover the cost of an advert on two of Green Community Travel's vehicles. As the vehicles travel around Yate, Chipping Sodbury and the surrounding areas it will advertise Shopmobility's valuable service. Jenny Bright, manager at Green Community Travel said: 'The joint service allows our passengers who do not have a mobility scooter to increase their independence as they can get door to door transport to the local shops and access the whole shopping centre. We're really pleased we can advertise this valuable service to our local community, both companies reduce social isolation and loneliness and enable people to retain their independence.' Sheridan Crew Project Manager at Shopmobility added: 'Green Community Transport (GCT) provides an invaluable service by transporting people including those with a disability that enables access to our service and other activities that enhance social engagement. Shopmobility recognises that community transport are able to bring people living in rural areas to our service which may be for those without access to a car or public transport. Both GCT and Shopmobility mutually address significant barriers to transport and wider travel faced by those with a disability that would otherwise not be possible by other modes of transport. The pandemic has highlighted the significant impact on mental health from social isolation during the months of lockdown. The experience of social isolation may be comparatively much greater for those confined to their home, not by lockdown but by virtue of ill health or where they live'. Shopmobility are currently open from 9.30am-4pm on a Tuesday and Friday between 9.30am-4pm but will also include Thursdays from October between 09.30 and 4pm. You can contact them on either 01454 868718 or 07999 574474. Green Community Travel operate 5 days a week Mon- Fri 07:30am-5:00pm, and you can contact them on 01454 228706."

<https://www.gazetteseries.co.uk/news/19546429.gct-shopmobility-work-together-yate-aid-mobility-needs/>



Give Community Volunteering a Go to Help Others

Midweek Herald: Norman Amey from TRIP - writes on behalf of Parental Minds: "What do you do when you have some spare time, you're bored with daytime TV, and you've read all the books on the shelf - twice? Have you thought about using that time to support others in the community? I enjoy driving and love helping people, so going for TRIP community transport charity is an ideal place for me to volunteer. I mostly take people to medical appointments, everything from check-ups and vaccinations to eye surgery and even Stem Cell treatment for myeloma! Some journeys are as short as half a mile, but I have even been up to Bristol, which gave me a genuine reason to make a road trip during lockdown! The people I take are so varied - from a young lady with Downs Syndrome to a veteran of the Vietnam War. There is always something to talk and laugh about. In just a few minutes you can hear the struggles and highlights of a life story and put the world to rights several times over. Those who have regular appointments at Exeter or further afield are often unable to access public transport and could never afford the cost of a taxi. If it is only a short appointment, I wait in the car park and read a book, but for longer appointments I might go for a short walk or even meet friends for coffee. Either way, I enjoy those few moments of 'me time' before pick-up time. On one occasion, my wife and I took a group outing by minibus to Buckfast Abbey. We enjoyed a day out with plenty of banter, not all of which was politically correct! We laughed all the way and even managed a detour for an ice cream at Widecombe in the Moor on the way home! I feel thoroughly appreciated by everyone involved. The management and admin staff

at the offices in New Street are excellent and very supportive. The charity even pays my expenses! My passengers describe TRIP as 'a lifeline'. A break from the loneliness and isolation of living alone. The possibility of getting out and about when you can no longer drive and the only affordable way they can get to appointments. They have, without exception, been extremely grateful. For me, and for anyone who enjoys helping others, TRIP is a great place to get involved. Sandra Fox, one of the lovely people who answers your calls, said we often hear comments from passengers, such as 'amazing', 'so helpful', 'wonderful company and conversations'. Helping people get to their medical appointments is a rewarding job and they are so grateful. Often the drivers hear varied and interesting stories from the passengers and both parties have a pleasant journey. One volunteer mentioned she is more than happy to help saying she appreciates the time to herself, often taking a book to read or listening to music. If the weather is nice, she takes the time to enjoy a walk, listen to the birds, and enjoy the scenery. 'It's a great opportunity to do something for the community', she said. If you would like to find out more about helping TRIP as a driver or in one of several other volunteer roles you can find out more on their website tripcta.org or call 01404 46529. TRIP is a member of the Mental Health Network facilitated by Parental Minds CIC. You can find us on Facebook here: <https://www.facebook.com/MentalHealthNetworkHoniton>. The Network consists of more than 60 Mental Health Support Services, both Statutory and community led, we meet every six weeks to share information and opportunities for training and to collaborate. If your organisation is interested in joining us, please contact hello@parentalminds.org.uk for more information."

<https://www.midweekherald.co.uk/news/trip-and-community-volunteering-8241080>



Bradbury Centre Helps Ease Community Transport Issues – and Pays Tribute to Sheila Fletcher

Northern Times: "A Hong Kong based charitable organisation that helped finance the building of the Bradbury Centre in Bonar Bridge 22 years ago, has stepped in to assist the day care unit again. The Bradbury Foundation, which helps elderly and underprivileged people and after which the centre took its name, has provided £55,000 towards the cost of a new minibus. Centre manager Lorraine Askew said: 'The foundation's UK representative Hugh Inman and his wife were on holiday in the area and called in to see us. He asked if there was anything we needed, and we said a bus, to which he replied that the foundation mostly funded buildings because the name Bradbury had to be visible as a condition of the award. We explained our bus was known as the Bradbury Bus and had the name on it. Mr Inman called some months later and invited us to put in a funding application which was successful. The new £69k bus was delivered in July. On its back door has been inscribed 'In memory of Sheila Fletcher'. Sheila was a director of the centre who sadly passed away last year. She was instrumental in setting up the unit's transport arm and also helped groups all over the Highlands with transport issues. Centre managers were set to sell the unit's seven-year-old bus, but then decided instead to make it available to local community groups at a reasonable cost. A £26k award was sourced from the last round of the Beatrice Fund and will help secure places for voluntary drivers on the Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme (MIDAS). Mrs Askew said: 'We are very grateful to the Beatrice Fund and now local community groups will be able to use the bus the bus to transport their members to events.'"

<https://www.northern-times.co.uk/news/bradbury-centre-helps-ease-community-transport-issues-248087/>



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