



**Community  
Transport at**



## Community Transport Newsletter No.14 November 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.

Back issues of these newsletters are uploaded on our website:

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

### Changes to HGV and Bus Driving Licences and Tests from 15 November 2021

DVSA/DVLA: "As we told you on 16 September, some rules about learning to drive a lorry are going to change later in 2021.

The changes affect:

- ) staging requirements for lorry and bus licences
- ) the off-road manoeuvres part of vocational driving tests being done by third-parties

Subject to Parliamentary processes, both changes will be introduced on Monday 15 November 2021." Details here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/changes-to-hgv-and-bus-driving-tests-from-autumn-2021#history>



Driver & Vehicle  
Licensing  
Agency

### Changes to Rapid Lateral Flow Test Availability from Pharmacies

A 'Collect Code' is now required before COVID19 lateral flow test kits can be obtained from pharmacies. See:

<https://test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk/collect-lateral-flow-kits>

### Thieves Drain Community Bus in Bradford of Fuel, as Demand to Fill-up Continues

ITV: "As scenes of people queuing to fill-up their cars have been seen across the country, thieves have cut through a fuel pipe to steal diesel at the Newlands Community Transport group. This has forced them to cancel numerous trips for schoolchildren and older people". Angela Robertson of Newlands Community Transport said: 'What makes them think that their need is any greater than our need? How dare they, this affects everyone in the community. It's purely selfish on their behalf.'"

<https://www.itv.com/news/calendar/2021-09-27/thieves-cut-through-bradford-community-bus-fuel-pipe-as-crisis-continues>



### Fuel Supply Heading in the Right Direction for Derbyshire - Derbyshire Community Transport is Relieved that their Service Users have been Unaffected

Planet Radio: "The craze for petrol is seemingly settling in Derbyshire as petrol services re-open, although a number still have steady queues. While a number of services have been affected in the area, things are looking up now as residents resist the urge to over-fuel their tanks and

stick to only buying what they need. Manager at Derbyshire Community Transport Elizabeth Esnouf was initially concerned that the fuel shortage might affect people travelling with their services if they could not fuel their vehicles adequately. As most of their service users cannot or choose not to drive, this could have had a large impact on their lives. 'As soon as we heard about what could be happening, we started by keeping a close eye on the fuel that we had in our vehicles and we've just kept them topped up.' But things are looking up now and Elizabeth is confident that people who use their services have not been held back. She said: 'We're watching very closely but it's not affected our services and we're able to reassure people and say yep, we're still working. We're also keeping in touch with our driver assistants, because there's no point having a bus if you've got no one to drive it!'

Elizabeth also noted that they have found more ways of working around challenges like the most recent fuel crisis since the announcement of the first lockdown and they have been looking ahead at what they would do if things took a turn for the worse. She added: 'We have a contingency plan in place as to how we would prioritise things and what we would do if we did run low on fuel. We'd probably go back to what we did in lockdown and do things like shopping for people but we're not in that place at the moment. What we did in lockdown was, we kept in contact with people that use our services. It's keeping people part of the overall family and we wanted to make sure there was no one really suffering or had a problem as a result of what was happening. That's what we did then and that's what we would do now.'"

<https://planetradio.co.uk/greatest-hits/derbyshire/news/fuel-crisis-improving-derbyshire-transport/>



## Volunteers Thanked for Work in Nidderdale

Harrogate Advertiser: "A celebration thank you was held in Pateley Bridge to give thanks to the many volunteers who helped during the Covid pandemic. Over 50 local people joined the tribute at the Memorial Hall as the Nidderdale community spirit was celebrated by North Yorkshire County Council. The celebration thanked volunteers for all their help and commitment with an 'afternoon tea in a box' and a box of chocolates. Local charity, Nidderdale Plus Community Hub, hosted the event and had invited all their core hub volunteers who give up their time to help their communities in normal, as well as Covid times. 'The hub has over 40 regular volunteers who help deliver services in the library, tourist information, front desk and community transport service,' said Helen Flynn, Executive Director of Nidderdale Plus Community Hub. 'In addition, volunteer coordinators from the length and breadth of Nidderdale and the Washburn Valley, who had coordinated volunteers to help during lockdowns with food deliveries, befriending and dog walking, etc., in their villages, were in attendance to be thanked for their hard work.' Stuart Martin, Chair of North Yorkshire County Council, was in attendance and gave a wonderful speech thanking volunteers as he presented a plaque to Paula Newson Smith, Chair of Trustees at Nidd Plus. Paula Newson Smith said: 'There was such a loud buzz of conversation and much laughter in the Pateley Bridge and Beverley Memorial Hall and it was so good to see everyone together and able to enjoy seeing and talking to each other, as well as eating the delicious afternoon tea. It was an honour to receive the plaque from Stuart on behalf of Nidd Plus, in recognition of all the hard work that Nidderdale volunteers have been putting in throughout the COVID crisis.' Volunteer driver Stuart Hattan, added that the event was welcomed. 'As volunteer drivers we are as ships that pass in the night and only fleetingly see each other, when we hand over the car for the next journey. This was an ideal time to catch up with other drivers and meet other volunteers, trustees and the staff members that work so hard keeping the organisation running.'"

<https://www.harrogateadvertiser.co.uk/news/people/volunteers-thanked-for-work-3400517>



**New Briefing: Paying people who receive benefits – Co-production and involvement**  
 Social Care Institute for Excellence:  
 "This briefing for local authorities, charities and organisations that support people who use services and their carers, looks at how people and carers who receive state benefits can get involved in paid co-production, involvement, participation in health and social care, highlighting what they need to be aware of to avoid any loss of benefits. Universal Credit work allowances and Permitted Work rates are revised annually in April. This briefing details benefit rates and rules between April 2021 and March 2022. Organisations paying people for their time as part of co-production, involvement and participation activities have a responsibility to ensure that people who receive benefits are supported with independent welfare rights advice. Organisations can introduce measures to prevent misunderstandings with Jobcentre Plus that can lead to benefits being stopped."

<https://www.scie.org.uk/co-production/supporting/paying-people-who-receive-benefits>



social care  
institute for excellence

## New Community Bus Route Launched in Malvern - Here's Where it Stops

Malvern Gazette: "A new community bus service has been launched to provide a vital link between Malvern and the surrounding villages. The service, running between Clifton-Upon-Teme and Malvern, will see trips to and from Malvern. Tickets will have to be pre-booked for the service, which wends its way through Suckley and Leigh Sinton before ending up at the Malvern Retail park. This is a 'Ring and Book' service operated by Tenbury Transport Trust and it will run every Thursday. Starting from the village hall in Clifton at 9.45am and arriving in Malvern at around 10.35am. The return trip will leave Malvern at 12.30pm and the retail park itself at 12.45pm. Passengers will be advised of the pick-up time when they book their seat. This service will be operated by Tenbury Transport Trust. Membership of TTT is a requirement for all passengers, however, the fee of £5 per annum will be waived for the first year."

<https://www.malverngazette.co.uk/news/19623696.new-community-bus-route-launched-malvern---stops/>



## Revised Stagecoach Timetable Serving New Hospital in Aviemore is Welcomed

Strathspey Herald: "Health chiefs and Highland Council have welcomed a new public transport bus timetable serving the new Badenoch and Strathspey Community Hospital. Working alongside the current contractor Stagecoach, the council's transport co-ordination unit has introduced a new network of bus routes and times across the strath that will connect with the new hospital at Dalfaber in Aviemore. Highland Council convener Bill Lobbanm, who is also chair of the



Badenoch and Strathspey Access Group, said: 'We have worked hard with our partners and organisations in the area to ensure that the public bus routes interconnect with the new hospital developed by NHS Highland in Aviemore. It's important, that people know how and where to find out about the new bus routes and times so that they can take full advantage of the service that will be available from next week. We will continue to work closely with the Badenoch and Strathspey Community Transport Company to fill in the inevitable gaps in provision.' Kenny Rodgers, NHS Highland's project director for the Badenoch and Strathspey service redesign, commented: 'We are delighted to see this joined-up approach to patient and visitor access to the new Badenoch and Strathspey Community Hospital in Aviemore come to conclusion. In collaboration with the Badenoch and Strathspey Community Transport Group, we designed the "hub at the hospital" concept in that the hospital waiting area is the bus shelter, which is warm and sheltered for people, has access to refreshments, has live bus time screens in the waiting area and good sight lines to the main entrance from specified seats for awaiting transport.' The new Stagecoach timetable will start from this Monday.



<https://www.strathspey-herald.co.uk/news/revised-stagecoach-timetable-serving-new-hospital-in-aviemor-252670/>

## Introducing CTA's new Director for Scotland

CTA: David Kelly has been appointed as CTA's Director for Scotland. David said: "I'm delighted to have joined CTA as its new Director for Scotland. It's a privilege to now be part of the community transport sector – a movement which has

accessibility, connectivity, inclusivity and sustainability at its heart and does such important work across Scotland. I've always worked where I felt I could make a difference and only where I truly believed in the mission – from collaborating with global civil society on human rights at the United Nations, to serving the community where I was born and raised in local government. And, for me, CTA is no different... My vision is of a secure, growing and thriving community transport sector which is a valued, properly supported and integral part of an integrated, inclusive and sustainable national transport system across Scotland, serving the needs of everyone in every community. That has to be a shared mission for CTA in Scotland with our members, partners and funders. Decarbonising our sector will be a major challenge in the years ahead in the context of perennial issues around funding, as well as emerging concerns around driver shortages, rising costs and supply chains. I hope to bring to CTA some of my expertise in this area from my previous role at the Scottish Council for Development and Industry, where I led and authored influential research on climate change, skills and technology. I also hope to build on the great work of Alice Duthuille – our fabulous Development Officer in Scotland – and my predecessor Rachael Murphy, to develop more Scottish policy content and events – like the 'Scotland Spotlight' updates and Scottish Members Meet-Ups – as well as support more Scottish collaborations, connections and partnerships..."

<https://ctauk.org/introducing-david-kelly/>



## Nailsea Driving Group Needs More Volunteers

North Somerset Times: "A driving group is looking for new volunteers to join them. Nailsea Availables has been running for more than 40 years. It was able to continue

our operations throughout the pandemic, albeit at a much reduced level, but many of its drivers were obliged to self-isolate and a number have decided not to return. In order to maintain its insurance and DBS cover during the pandemic, the group has been strongly supported by Nailsea and District Community Transport. Anyone considering volunteering will receive a small amount to cover their expenses. There is no commitment to volunteering for a set number of hours or days; you can accept a drive request as and when it suits. At Nailsea Availables, most of its drivers volunteer about once a week. For more information, email [jeanne.wood@virginmedia.com](mailto:jeanne.wood@virginmedia.com). A group spokesman said: 'As a North Somerset wide community, we all need volunteers to support the NHS as it tries to deal with the backlog of appointments, by taking the elderly and frail who do not have relatives nearby to help them.'" <https://www.northsomersettimes.co.uk/news/nailsea-availables-looking-for-new-drivers-8420630>



More from Nailsea...

### Somerset Town's Vision to Launch Electric Bus Service

Somerset Live: "A North Somerset town could get an electric bus service to better connect its residents following a cash windfall. Nailsea Town Council has received more than £183,000 from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The CIL is money that developers have to pay to North Somerset Council to help fund the cost of infrastructure such as schools and transport improvements. Fifteen per cent of the money is passed by North Somerset to the town or parish council where the development takes place, giving them direct control over how the money is spent in their local communities. This increases to 25 per cent if the town or parish has an adopted neighbourhood plan. The rest is retained by North Somerset

Council to spend on infrastructure to support housing development. Payments are made to town and parish councils every six months. The money received in Nailsea is from the development of 450 homes at Youngwood Lane as well as smaller projects in the town. The council is now looking at what it can spend the money on, with an idea for an electric community bus service under consideration. The idea is a number of initiatives on a wish list, drawn up by the council in 2019. The bus would predominantly be a town service, running people to and from the shops and to locations such as the railway station. Nailsea Town Council clerk Jo Duffy said: 'People have commented in the past about the possibility of a "hopper" bus service around the town which ran a circuit taking people to and from the shops and linking into other public transport hubs such as the railway station. It would be aimed at short journeys around the town. We have a large elderly population in Nailsea and this would be a service that could pick people up cheaply and efficiently, linking people to places, without increasing our carbon footprint. This is very much an idea at the moment and further discussion and consultation will be needed.'" <https://www.somersetlive.co.uk/news/somerset-news/somerset-towns-vision-launch-electric-6057047>



### FACT: This Team has 'Hearts of Gold'

Fenland Citizen: "A team of volunteers and their leader have both won a charity's Hearts of Gold Award 2021. Team Fenland Association of Community Transport and the organisation's chairman Gary Christy were nominated separately for a Linking Hands Charity UK's Hearts of Gold Awards 2021, which are open to anyone from across East Anglia - including Fenland. And this week they were presented with their awards by Steven Schooling and his wife Linda, from

Wisbech St Mary, who run Linking Hands. The self-supported charity offers a range of free services including bereavement counselling, alcohol and drug rehab, as well as cancer support. The Hearts of Gold Awards have been running throughout the year - with monthly winners up to November - and then in December there will be overall winners chosen from the monthly winners. The monthly winners receive a personalised mug and a plaque to mark their success. Team FACT and Gary were both nominated by Nicola Christy, who is the co-ordinator of the community hub. In her nomination Nicola wrote: 'I would like to nominate Team FACT who since Covid-19 took effect have successfully run a shop and drop service to the community and since September running this alongside its Dial a Ride service. This has all been possible thanks to the dedication of staff and volunteers. I am very proud to be part of the team offering this service but would like to say a massive thank you to the rest of the Team for all their hard work initially working into the evening to get the orders out and then running the shopping and the transport together. We have tried to help the community in whatever way we can. This has included putting knitted hearts in the boxes for Valentine's Day to try to bring a smile to the people that are alone at home, there are plans for something at Easter too. I would also like to say a big thank you to the community who have sent us cards, cakes, sweets and donations. These have been very much appreciated and this has at times kept us going. In addition, I would like to nominate the chairman - I know he is my husband but at work he is my boss. I nominate Gary Christy, chairman at FACT Community Transport. As Covid-19 took effect, FACT ceased its community transport in March 2020. A decision was made to offer a shop and drop service to the community that were shielding and unable to access an essential shop. To date we have completed over 8,500 shops at our local Tesco. Gary has been the chairman for the last two years, most days he will be found working tirelessly unpaid along with other trustees, at times on the less pleasant and thankless side of running such an organisation. Gary has given FACT real direction and a solid foundation of ethics that were previously missing. Gary has a

demanding full-time job that at times he has been doing alongside being chairman, many nights he has sat up with a big spreadsheet working out the figures to enable us to keep going. Gary does all this without any fanfare or self-promotion but through having a heart of gold and a real desire to serve without reward. He is a truly positive man who will only ever produce positive results for the benefit of the community.'

<https://www.fenlandcitizen.co.uk/news/fact-this-team-has-hearts-of-gold-9218031/>



Also from FACT:

**FACT Holds First Befriending Club Lunch since Pandemic**  
**Cambs Times:** "Fact Community Transport based in March held its first befriending club lunch outing on Wednesday (October 6) following the pandemic. Now that most of the community has received their two vaccinations, people are being encouraged to get out and about more. Those who attend the club say they feel less isolated, problems are shared and that their confidence as well as their mental and physical well-being improve. Attendees who are older and vulnerable can sometimes spend days alone and look forward to being collected by FACT transport who offer a door-to-door service. Nicola Christy, Community Hub Co-ordinator at FACT said: 'It was really good to be out again, having a lovely time with friends. There was lots of laughter as the excellent food was eaten. Some great friendships are formed at the groups too. A big thank you to The Fitzwilliam Arms Pub in Marholm who catered for the 13 members.'"

<https://www.cambstimes.co.uk/news/fact-march-holds-first-befriending-club-lunch-8396412>



## Fundraising Puddings!

Kirkbymoorside Town Blog: "Ryedale Community Transport is raising funds to purchase the first electric wheelchair accessible vehicle in Ryedale and possibly the first one in North Yorkshire. The cost of the vehicle is £67,500 and it will be custom built with an electric lift to allow us to carry passengers in their wheelchair. The lift will also be used to assist passengers who are unable to enter the vehicle unaided. The vehicle will be used throughout the whole of Ryedale and will be available to take passengers to medical appointments, to go shopping, visit friends etc. It will help us tackle combat the issue of social isolation, rural transport issues and at the same time we will be doing our bit to help the environment with this eco-friendly vehicle. We are hosting a 'pudding event' in October and are inviting you to join us or create a pudding for the event. Guests on the evening will vote for their top three puddings which will all win a prize on the evening. If you would like to purchase a ticket or enter a pudding please don't hesitate to get in touch, this is the first fundraising event we have been able to hold in two very long challenging years!"

<https://www.kirkbymoorside.info/fundraising-puddings/>

**Pudding Evening**  
Fundraising event hosted by  
**Ryedale Community Transport**



Come along and enjoy an evening with your family and friends tasting puddings, then vote for your top three favourites.

Join us at Pickering Methodist Church, Potter Hill at 7.30pm Wednesday 20th October 2021

£10 per ticket (includes entrance drink and a raffle ticket to a prize draw on the evening. Please ring (01653) 693059 to purchase




Also at Ryedale...

## New Service to Rove Rural Areas

Gazette Herald: "A new service has been launched to help people who struggle to access transport. Ryedale Community Transport has received funding from the National Lottery Community Fund to develop a Dial & Ride service for Ryedale. The Ryedale Rover is being designed to address the needs of the many individuals and communities who struggle to access mainstream transport due to a variety of issues. It is particularly aimed at people with special transport needs due to disability or poor mobility and residents for whom there is no public transport or affordable alternative to make their journey. Ken Gill, Chief Officer at Ryedale Community Transport said: 'We know, having been doing this for many years, that difficulties in getting out and about in rural areas not only restricts people's ability to access ordinary services such as medical or hospital appointments or just a routine shopping trip or visiting friends. But also the lack of transport options directly impacts on the quality of life of many residents; limiting their independence, increasing feelings of isolation and loneliness. There are sadly many examples of this following nearly a year of isolation for a great many residents in Ryedale.' Users of the service will need to pre-book journeys at least 24 hours in advance, which will provide flexible transport for minimal cost. Ken added: 'The Ryedale Rover will be an evolving service which can expand and develop as demand grows. It is hoped that when fully implemented it will provide travel anywhere within Ryedale at an affordable price and will also serve popular destinations such as major supermarkets. The vehicles will collect you from your doorstep and drop you back at home.'

Further details can be found on the website [www.ryedalect.org](http://www.ryedalect.org) or phone 01653 698888."

<https://www.gazetteherald.co.uk/news/19633041.new-service-rove-rural-areas/>





### Charities Bouncing Back to Life

The Midsomer Norton, Radstock & District Journal: "The new High Sheriff of Somerset, Thomas Sheppard and the new CEO of Quartet Community Foundation, Suzanne Rolt, joined forces to visit a host of community groups across B&NES and North Somerset. They set out to hear how local charities are bouncing back to life after lockdown. They also wanted to thank them for helping some of the most vulnerable people in our local communities through this difficult time. Together they visited eight projects funded through Quartet Community Foundation in the last two years, including the SWALLOW Café at The Hive in Peasedown St John, Gympanzees Bath Roadshow at Threeways School and The Strawberry Line Café in Yatton. Suzanne Rolt, CEO at Quartet Community Foundation, said: 'Starting my new role during the pandemic has meant that I've had to wait for restrictions to lift before getting out and about to see all these extraordinary projects. It's certainly been worth the wait. Meeting the people who run them has reinforced for me the astonishing levels of passion and commitment that drive our smaller charities and voluntary organisations. I've been inspired too by the positive impact Quartet's grants are having in our local communities. Quartet has awarded grants to well over 1,000 community projects in B&NES, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire since the pandemic began. I'm immensely proud of this, but I know there is still so much more to do'...

Thomas Sheppard, High Sheriff of Somerset said: 'This year I want to shine a light on the great work going on in local charities across Somerset. These eight projects may

serve different communities, but they all have one thing in common: their commitment to creating opportunities and improving life for some of the most vulnerable members in society.' In total they visited and met with eight local good causes [including] the volunteer-led Chew Valley Community Transport Scheme. If you're looking for funding for a community project in the West of England, Quartet may have a suitable grant available: <https://quartetcf.org.uk/apply-for-a-grant/>."



### Transport Pilot Launched to Help Isolated Communities around Bungay

Beccles & Bungay Journal: "A community transport pilot is launching in Bungay after a council funding grant. The Bungay SHoppa scheme will connect those isolated and without transport in neighbouring villages, offering them a chance to travel into the town on market days. Delivered by the Bungay Events and Business Association (BEBA) and BACT Community Transport, the scheme will serve stops in Wainford, Shipmeadow, Barsham, Ilketshall St Andrew, Ilketshall St John, Ilketshall St Lawrence, Ilketshall St Margaret, South Elmham St Peter, South Elmham St Michael, All Saints, Rumburgh, Homersfield and Flixton. Diddy Ward, chair of BEBA, said: 'Connecting the Ilketshalls and the Saints to Bungay on market day has long been on BEBA's wish list and formed part of the Town Centre Action Plan for Bungay under the East Suffolk Town Centre Initiative. We are delighted to be working with BACT on the pilot and hope the Bungay SHoppa will see many people



using it to come into town and shop, meet up with friends, have their hair done or even just get out of the house for a couple of hours for a cup of tea and a bit of cake in Bungay's cafés.' Starting from October 28, the pilot will run on Thursdays until February, as well as for any Sunday street markets happening during this time.

Debbie Blowers, BACT's general manager, said: 'We are delighted to be part of this joint project running the Bungay SHoppa bus service for passengers from some of the most isolated Suffolk villages into Bungay. It is a great opportunity for people to spend a few hours in town without worrying about parking or getting there if they do not have access to a car. Mick, our cheerful and helpful driver, looks forward to meeting his passengers.' The project has received funding from East Suffolk Council's Beccles, Bungay, Halesworth and villages Community Partnership, as well as from district councillor Judy Cloke's Enabling Communities budget. She said: 'I am delighted we have been able to bring this project to fruition. Visiting rural parishes in my ward, I have become very aware of the lack of amenities and public transport. Debbie and her team have worked so hard with BEBA to get this project off the ground. I hope it will encourage more people to get out and about and, of course, Bungay will welcome them.' For more information, including the timetable, visit <https://bungay-suffolk.co.uk>."

<https://www.becclesandbungayjournal.co.uk/news/local-council/bungay-shoppa-transport-pilot-launched-8425110>



## Nottingham CT Award Nominations

Press Release: "CT4N Charitable Trust is delighted to announce being shortlisted in three separate categories at the Community Transport Association's

prestigious CT Awards. Launched in 2019, the national CT Awards recognise and celebrate the work of the community transport sector and the values that are at the very core of what CT4N Charitable Trust has been doing for over 40 years. Elaine Allitt, who works for CT4N Charitable Trust as Charity Co-ordinator has played a part in all three nominations and is a highly valued member of the team which specialises in providing community transport services for individuals with a mobility challenge and for community organisations across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

Chair of CT4N Charitable Trust Andrew Grieve said: 'I am delighted to see that CT4N have been shortlisted in three categories for this year's CT Awards. I think it is a measure of how far we are progressing as a Charitable Trust to be in the mix with so many other excellent organisations for these prestigious awards. The charity is front and centre of everything we do in working with local communities to the best that we can in delivering community transport services in Nottinghamshire.' Elaine has been shortlisted for the Community Transport Champion Award and was nominated for playing an integral part in providing a heroic role as part of a logistical response during the coronavirus pandemic. Before the start of the pandemic, Elaine's role was very different to what it is today and has been transformed due to her natural ability to help other people. As the country entered the first stages of lockdown, Elaine continued to come into work every day. Even though we saw a significant reduction in the number of people using the Easylink service, this did not deter Elaine from going above and beyond to help people in need. Elaine started carrying out telephone welfare checks on all our Easylink customers, who were having to isolate at home. In addition to offering a listening ear, Elaine also organised medical supplies, arranged for drivers to collect prescriptions and undertake essential shopping for some of our most vulnerable customers. She also organised the collection of items from her colleagues and friends, so that she could provide several food hampers for people who were suffering unavoidable hardship. When the Covid vaccinations programme started, it was Elaine again who was at the forefront of ensuring our most vulnerable

customers had transport to take them for their vaccinations. In addition to providing transport for Covid vaccinations in Nottingham, Elaine also co-ordinated joint-working with Mansfield CVS to provide transport in their area for people to also attend Covid vaccinations as part of their Community Champions Project.

Elaine said: 'I am so proud of all the work my team and I have done over the last few years. My passion is helping the vulnerable in the community and to be nominated for this award for doing the job I love means so much. I would like to thank all the management team and all the team who work with me for their continued support.' Together with charity trustees Pam Jarvis and Philippa Spencer, Elaine is also part of the team that has been shortlisted in the 'Keeping in Touch' category. Due to the sheer number of welfare checks required, Elaine enlisted the help of trustees Pam and Philippa. This ensured all service users were safe in the knowledge that help and support was only a phone call away. The team also identified people within the local community who were on low incomes or identified as vulnerable and worked with Nourish in Sherwood and Bestop Kitchen in Bestwood to co-ordinate the delivery of regular hot meals. The final category that CT4N Charitable Trust have been shortlisted in is the 'Community Transport Awards Photo Competition' category. This category is for an image that encapsulates the spirit of community transport during the coronavirus pandemic and is being judge by a public vote.

Our entry for this competition shows Elaine delivering a Christmas food hamper to Easylink customers Arthur and Elma Gee from Mapperley in December 2020. Managing Director Ian Combellack said: 'Whether it is a bunch of flowers for a customer who is feeling low, a birthday card to celebrate a milestone, reassuring customers that our services are safe to use, or providing a shoulder for people to cry on, Elaine has been there all the time...Community transport is more than just a bus service to help get people from A to B - it's about people and the little extras that can make a huge difference. Our organisation is at the heart of community transport showing what it does best - serving the community.'



## 2021 CTA Award Nominations in Full

Community Transport Provider of the Year:

- J Badenoch and Strathspey Community Transport;
- J Readibus;
- J Out and About Community Transport

Volunteer of the Year:

- J Ann Rodger – Larkhall and District Volunteer Group;
- J Hazel Johnston – Badenoch and Strathspey Community Transport;
- J Nigel Hinch – Ability CIC

Partnership of the Year:

- J Bristol Community Transport and Fare Share;
- J HCL Transport, Pilton Equalities Project and Scran Academy;
- J Larkhall & District Volunteer Group and Larkhall Community Network

Keeping in Touch:

- J Bridges Community Car Scheme;
- J Centre 81;
- J CT4N Charitable Trust

Volunteer Car Scheme of the Year:

- J HMR Circle Volunteer Drivers Service;
- J Stockport Car Scheme;
- J Tunbridge Wells Community Car Service

Community Transport Champion:

- J Aneurin Bevan University Health Board;
- J Brian Hughes – Welsh Border CT;
- J Elaine Allitt – CT4N Charitable Trust

Commitment to Sustainability and

Lifetime Achievement: There's no shortlist for these two awards, just an overall winner who will be announced on the night, so make sure you join us to find out who it is!

The judges are

- J Martin Taylor, Endsleigh Insurance;
- J Jessica Davies, Social Finance;

- J Naomi Mason, Development Trusts Association Scotland;
- J Lee Robinson, Transport for Wales and
- J Ross Behrouzi, Department for Transport.

Bill Freeman: "Our online awards ceremony will be taking place at 6pm on 18 November and will be free to attend for all CTA members. The last year and a half has been a difficult one for everyone in the community transport sector, but time and again we've seen our members doing incredible work to support the people in their communities who need them the most. We're excited to come together as a sector in November to recognise and celebrate their dedication.

In judging our nominees, our panel was overwhelmed by the incredible examples of community transport providers going above and beyond, in so many different ways, to support their communities throughout the coronavirus pandemic. For most categories, our judges have chosen three shortlisted entries and the winners will be announced at our online awards ceremony on 18 November! Whether you were shortlisted or not, the quality of all our entries was incredibly high and we're proud to have you as our members. Congratulations to all our finalists and thank you to our judging panel for giving up their time to assess the nominations. To find out who wins, make sure you join us at the 2021 Community Transport Awards, 6pm on 18 November – places are free for CTA members." <https://ctauk.org/2021-awards-shortlist/>



**Forres Osprey Trust Free Community Bus Service Needs New Drivers and Board Members**  
 Forres Gazette: "A local charity that provides free community transport needs help to carry on. The Forres Osprey Bus – for older folk and people with disabilities in

the area that has been run by volunteers since 1973 – now needs new drivers and board members. Trust chairman, Shaun Moat, is one of five current trustees along with Lorna Creswell, David Parker, Kevin Skivington and Graham Hilditch. He said: 'As coronavirus pandemic restrictions end, we are starting to see groups start to re-use the bus which is great. However, we need to discuss the future of the service and recruit more people to help.' The Osprey Trust meets bi-monthly, currently online but usually at Royal British Legion (Scotland) in Forres. The group needs a new Secretary and Treasurer in particular. Shaun said: 'The Secretary is responsible for minutes, admin and dealing with third parties such as Forres Area Community Trust (FACT). Also, working with the Chairman to prepare the agenda for meetings. The Treasurer looks after our accounts, makes payments, works with our annual auditor and submission of annual accounts to the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator. It's very little work for a few hours-a-month!'...The Osprey Bus can be booked by calling 01309 674 388 or by e-mailing [info@forresarea.org](mailto:info@forresarea.org), marking the e-mail Osprey Bus Booking." <https://www.forresgazette.co.uk/news/osprey-trust-open-agm-253138/>



### Partick and Thornwood Communities Vote on Grants for Local Projects

Scottish Housing News: "The 28th of September saw the close of voting for the Autumn launch of the Partick and Thornwood Ideas Fund, a participatory budgeting project where local residents voted on which community projects they would most like to see funded. The



September round of funding received 18 eligible applications and 760 residents participated in voting for the projects they would like to see funded. Thirteen projects were ultimately successful and will share the £10,000 funding pot. Successful projects included Christmas hampers for users of the foodbank at Downvale Free Church, a community growing project outside Partick Library and free CDs of live music recordings for care homes, to replace the live performances they used to be able to enjoy pre-pandemic. These and the rest of the 13 projects will enrich the area in many different ways, from bringing people together with new activities to adding greenery to public spaces for all to enjoy. A spokesperson for Knit and Natter at the Annexe, one of the successful awardees, said: 'This is a great source of funding, allowing local people to make local decisions - democracy in action! The group knits and crochets many items for local community and charitable groups. The award will allow the group to go to a panto. It also allows us to hire community transport. Transport is really good for the group, many of whom are vulnerable and don't like travelling alone. Thanks to everyone involved in this process.' The Fund will be launching another round of funding in January 2022 and anyone with an idea for a community project in the Partick and Thornwood area is encouraged to apply. The Ideas Fund is a participatory budgeting (PB) project funded by the Scottish Government's Investing in Communities Fund. PB is a decision-making process through which citizens deliberate and negotiate over the distribution of public resources. Residents (individuals or groups) were able to apply to fund an idea that benefits the local area; individuals could apply for up to £500 and groups for up to £1,000. PB allows citizens to play a direct role in deciding how and where resources should be spent. These programmes create opportunities for engaging, educating and empowering citizens, which can foster a more cohesive and just community."

<https://www.scottishhousingnews.com/article/partick-and-thornwood-communities-votes-on-grants-for-local-projects>



### Delight as Bradbury Centre Awarded Funding for Community Bus

The Northern Times: "A popular day care centre in Bonar Bridge has received funding to operate its community transport initiative for the next three years. The Bradbury Centre, run by Creich, Croick and Kincardine District Day Care Association, has been awarded just over £26,000 from the Beatrice Partnership Fund to support its transport arm. The centre has operated a mini bus service for its elderly clients since 2013 when it was given grant aid from SSE Renewables' Achany Fund towards the purchase of a vehicle. Earlier this year the unit purchased a second minibus thanks to a £55,000 donation from the Bradbury Foundation, after which the centre is named. Managers then decided not to sell the older bus but to make it available to community groups from Lairg to Dornoch at an affordable cost. The aim is to have more than 20 community drivers by the third year with six already having completed minibus driver awareness training. It is envisaged the service will benefit more than 1,000 people each year. Centre manager Lorraine Askew said: 'We were delighted to receive our award from the Beatrice Partnership and look forward to our bus being well used by a variety of local community groups.' Carol Shaw, manager at the Kyle of Sutherland Hub, where the youth group is based said: 'We can't wait to take our youth club members for a trip in the bus.'

<https://www.northern-times.co.uk/news/delight-as-bradbury-centre-awarded-funding-for-community-bus-254332/>



### Tribute Made to Chris Allason, a Local Legend in Brampton

News and Star: "A well-loved man and member of his community has passed away recently and his wife has given a tribute. Chris Allason, a man who lived in Brampton, shared the secretary job at Brampton Bowls Club, as well as playing at a county level. His wife, Sheila, spoke of his life: 'He was a volunteer in so many areas of his life, he was a scout leader and involved in the Lanercost Cricket Club as well. He worked as a Special Educational Needs Coordinator at Caldew School starting in 1985 till 2009. He was a big Carlisle United fan and played at the cricket club through the 1970s and 1980s and was welfare officer before he died. His father was a very good coach and player at the bowls club, so he followed in his footsteps. On retiring from the school, he volunteered in many groups, particularly those that involved driving, including the Border Rambler mini bus, the Cumbria Community Transport minibus and the Voluntary Car Scheme. He delivered food parcels for Meals on Wheels and for SHINE in Brampton. He was an NHS responder during lockdown, picking up medication for people isolating. He was a local lad, born and brought up in Houghton, everybody described him as a kind and gentle man. He had a positive influence on so many people through his life, that's why know so many friends will be there to say goodbye to him, he influenced their lives. He was a man of simple pleasures, but he helped to make other people's lives better, he had a wicked sense of humour, even the nurses that looked after him towards the end noted he was a funny man.'"

<https://www.newsandstar.co.uk/news/19647925.tribute-made-chris-allason-local-legend-brampton/>



### Poynton Community Transport Project Donation Received with Open Hands

In Your Area: "A local community transport project has been awarded £200 from a property developer. The charity Open Hands will use the donation from Bellway to pay its drivers' expenses and cover administrative charges. Open Hands which has been serving the community for over 35 years arranges transport for the elderly, disabled and vulnerable residents of Poynton, in Cheshire taking them to see medical professionals or to simply visit loved ones when public transport is not an option. The service relies solely on volunteers to drive but to also answer the phone in the office and assist at the regular coffee mornings that take place at the charity's base in Poynton Methodist Church three times a week. Adelle Johnson, from Open Hands, said: 'We were delighted to hear from Bellway and are grateful for their donation. We have a team of volunteers who all help out because they care, but we do need monetary donations to keep the service going, so to receive £200 from a local house builder is great. We use all donations and money raised through fundraising to pay for our drivers' expenses and cover administrative charges.' Sales director at Bellway Manchester, Hollie Reynolds said: 'The community spirit in Poynton is superb and Open Hands was suggested by a member of the Bellway team as a great local charity to support. The service they offer is vital for those who cannot, for various reasons, use public transport and we were thrilled to make a small donation to help out. As a company, we understand the importance of giving

back to the local community and Open Hands was a perfect choice.”

<https://www.inyourarea.co.uk/news/poynton-community-transport-project-donation-received-with-open-hands/>



### Families' Prayers are Answered as Groups Unite

Echo News: "A Christian group was the answer to many prayers when it raised money to help families in need during the pandemic. Harwich's Salvation Army raised money to buy more than 60,000 meals for vulnerable people and families in need during the Covid-19 pandemic. Church leaders Shawn and Victoria Moye joined forces with Harwich Connexions to support people struggling to feed themselves and their families. The money came from public donations and grants. By the end of September, the Salvation Army had provided enough food parcels to make 62,784 meals. That compares to only one food parcel being given out by the couple by January 2020. But when lockdown saw a surge in demand, they knew a different approach was needed. Shawn said: 'There was a real sense of urgency and when we had requests for food parcels, we provided them as soon as possible. People started to donate and a number of companies in and around the town also helped. A team of people went to Morrison's for supplies before the food was bagged up and taken to the community transport teams at Harwich Connexions.'

Victoria said: 'The pandemic has left people facing debt and uncertainty. We had a message recently from Tendring Council asking us to support someone who had to move without warning. We were able to provide them with food in an hour.' The pair praised everyone who has helped out during the pandemic. The joint leaders

teamed up with 22 other organisations from around the area to launch support network Harwich Helps to aid people who are vulnerable and self-isolating. The leaders also paid tribute to all the volunteers who came forward to offer their time. Shawn said: 'We were much stronger together. Collaboration with others meant we had a much greater impact but it's easy to forget there are still people who are in real need. We've been blessed with donations and would also like to thank the public for all their support.' If you'd like to donate, go to [justgiving.com/fundraising/tsa-community-support-000210](https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/tsa-community-support-000210)."

<https://www.echo-news.co.uk/news/19646664.families-prayers-answered-groups-unite/?ref=rss>



**Rushden Charity Awarded £1,000 to Help Serve's Community Befriending Service**  
Northants Telegraph: "A Rushden charity has received a donation from a homebuilder to help towards its work providing support to elderly members of the community with a variety of different services. Serve specialises in offering a range of services to help people remain independent in their own homes, such as community transport, minibus day trips and homecare services. Barratt Homes' £1,000 donation will help to ensure Serve can continue its befriending service by enabling the recruitment and training of volunteers to spend time providing important social interaction with elderly people and vulnerable adults in the community. Jess Slater, chief executive at Serve, said: 'We were over the moon to hear about Barratt Homes' donation, it's wonderful to have the support of other local businesses. We have been very busy throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, for example getting service users to their vaccination



appointments. Also, our befriending service has been recognised at Statutory Level and we have since been working closely with the NHS to provide this at a countywide level. The developer's community fund scheme is excellent; it shows dedication and support to the community at a local level. We are extremely grateful for Barratt Homes' contribution towards combating loneliness and isolation amongst the older generation in the local community. The donation will go a long way to contributing towards the mission and vision of our charity.' Amer Alkhalil, managing director at Barratt Homes Northampton, said: 'We are so pleased to be able to support Serve and the amazing work they are doing. It is important to us a leading house builder to recognise and support local charities and organisations who help the communities near our developments.' To find out more about Serve and the work it is doing, please visit <https://serve.org.uk/>." <https://www.northantstelegraph.co.uk/news/people/rushden-charity-awarded-ps1000-to-help-serve-community-befriending-service-3431560>



## Australia - #DoSomethingGood – for you, but also your community!

News of the Area: "With 35 years experience, The Community Transport Company and our team of dedicated drivers are at the ready to get you where you need to be, when you need to be there! CEO Bethany Langford understands the transition between working life and retirement can be a little difficult to navigate and may leave people feeling isolated. 'But rest assured, we're here to help you stay connected, get you where you need to be and out and about accessing your community. A professional, safe, reliable service offering accessible vehicles with highly trained drivers that always go that extra step to ensure their

passengers receive the best of care and arrive on time! There's something for everyone, whether it be our door to door service for appointments, our shopping buses, or even just jumping aboard our social buses to enjoy some good company. We are a registered charity with 100% of our profits reinvested back into the community. That means, for every dollar you spend with us, we give back \$14 of value back to the community – a fantastic return on investment! So, #DoSomethingGood, jump aboard today and join in the fun!' For further information on available services, please call our office on 1300 812 504 or visit our website [www.communitytransport.net.au](http://www.communitytransport.net.au)." <https://www.newsofthearea.com.au/dosomethinggood-for-you-but-also-your-community-80675>



## People-powered Bus Service Finally Opens New Depot in Witney

Oxford Mail: "A lifeline community bus service run by volunteers has finally opened its new home. After five years, West Oxfordshire Community Transport have cut the ribbon on their new depot in Witney. They had been seeking premises since forming in the winter of 2016 and finally acquired and redeveloped a site on Windrush Valley Road over the summer. Robert Courts MP, Mayor of Witney Cllr Joy Aitman, directors, passengers and invited guests attended the opening held by the not-for-profit company. Margaret Burden, Chair and Director of WOCT, described the occasion as 'a special day.' She said: 'WOCT started in June 2016 as a concept, we were registered in November 2016, we started our operations in January 2017. Ever since then, we have talked about the wonderful dream of having our own depot – what it would mean, what an absolute game-changer it would be for our organisation. This dream kept

disappearing into the future, we never seemed to get there and it was so frustrating, because we knew we needed a base where our buses could be, where our offices could be, we knew what a difference it would make. I can't tell you what it means that we're here and that we've arrived at this point. It's fabulous.' As well as parking spaces for the organisation's fleet of buses, the new depot also has offices for the Operations and Administration team, a training room and a break room for drivers.

The depot was formally opened by Witney MP Robert Courts, following a short speech by Cllr Aitman which paid tribute to WOCT's work in the community, for which it has recently been nominated for a national prize at the UK Social Enterprise Awards. The opening ceremony also provided an opportunity to publicly thank David Miles, who was departing the organisation after five years as a volunteer. West Oxfordshire Community Transport is a not-for-profit charitable Community Benefit Society which believes that local bus services have an important role in maintaining an active and engaged community and aims to deliver sustainable public transport services. Any surpluses are not distributed among members or external shareholders, but returned to the organisation for further investment in bus services. Organisers said: 'Anyone can become a member and help keep local bus services running on people power.' For more information, email [info@woct.org.uk](mailto:info@woct.org.uk) or telephone 01993 630124."

<https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/1966492.people-powered-bus-service-finally-opens-new-depot-witney/>



Andrew Lewer Column: Two Days in the Life of an MP  
Northampton Chronicle: "...On Thursday, I met some residents from St Crispin

Retirement Village outside Northampton Museum. They had been visiting, courtesy of a wonderful social enterprise called Ability Community Transport, run by a local Duston Councillor, Nigel Hinch and his wife, Lynn. We went to St Crispin's with the residents for cake and tea and a proper chat about the community bus service. I was joined by two other Duston councillors, Jake Roberts and Anna King. Their enthusiasm for the bus service was infectious. The chats with the residents were so engaging and enjoyable, such as with a very youthful 91-year-old who told me her story of how she ended up in Northampton in 1941 after the Luftwaffe destroyed her family home in London. I then had a personal tour of the village with the staff and came away from that day inspired and heartened by the public service of Nigel, Lynn, Jake and Anna. My column was going to be all about that visit and reflections about community transport, isolation and how social care is not just about health and very much not just about the NHS etc."

<https://www.northamptonchron.co.uk/news/opinion/columnists/andrew-lewer-column-two-days-in-the-life-of-an-mp-3429715>



Grants of £4,500 Available in Bradford to Upgrade Minibuses and Light Goods Vehicles before Clean Air Zone Charge Introduced

Telegraph & Argos: "Companies that use light goods vehicles and minibuses can apply for £4,500 to upgrade each vehicle before Bradford's Clean Air Zone is introduced. Bradford Council has received £10,354,500 of funding from the Government to award 2,301 vehicle grants of up to £4,500 per vehicle for eligible companies. These grants are available to charities, educational establishments, community transport organisations and businesses classed as

small or medium sized enterprises, (including self-employed or sole traders), based within the District. Three quarters of Bradford's bus fleet now meets greener targets The grants are available to:

- J Upgrade non-complaint LGVs and minibuses to Clean Air Zone standards
- J Purchase a replacement Clean Air Zone compliant vehicle
- J Cover the ongoing running costs of a fully electric vehicle (where owned or leased for a minimum of 2 years) - paid in two annual instalments.

For more information about the LGV and minibus grants and/or to make an application visit

<https://www.bradford.gov.uk/breathe-better-bradford/what-help-is-available/clean-air-lgv-fund-programme/>

The grants are available on a first come, first served basis.

Councillor Sarah Ferriby, Portfolio Holder for Healthy People and Places, said: 'These grants are a great opportunity for organisations using LGVs and minibuses to gear up for the Clean Air Zone. If you are thinking of applying, don't delay, as this fund is likely to receive an enthusiastic response.' Bradford Council was directed by the Government to implement the CAZ to cut illegal levels of air pollution in areas of the District. Certain categories of vehicles that do not meet clean air standards will be charged for entering the zone. This will include vans, taxis, lorries, buses and coaches. There will be no charge for private cars. The zone will include Bradford city centre, from and including the outer ring road, extending up the Canal Road corridor and Manningham Lane into Shipley and Saltaire."

<https://www.thetelegraphandargus.co.uk/news/19660993.grants-4-500-available-upgrade-minibuses-light-goods-vehicles-clean-air-zone-charge-introduced/>



## Popular CT Scheduling System Flexiroute Acquired by 365 Response

365 Response Website: "We're excited to share the news today that well-established route planning software company Flexiroute, has been acquired by 365 Response and welcomed to our rapidly growing team! This new partnership brings together the two leading providers of Home to School transport in the UK, working with some of the largest councils, including West Yorkshire Combined Authority, Durham County Council, St Helen's Council and Birmingham City Council. A combined fifty years' experience across the Group will drive rapid improvements in service by harmonising the best in sector technology, for the wider benefit of over 200 customers across Local Authorities, the NHS, Community Transport and Private Transport organisations. Brendan Fatchett, CEO of 365 Response shared, 'Acquiring Flexiroute is a huge step forward in the implementation of our long-term strategy to support the delivery of zero-carbon solutions for Councils. This partnership supports our aim to be the single best provider of transport management solutions for the public and private sector. We are passionate about developing new solutions to better service the market and we are excited to be moving forward as a larger group, with the whole Flexiroute team joining the 365 Response fold. We are completely committed to the Flexiroute team and their customers, looking forward to working closely to drive true innovation and transformation in the sector.' Existing Flexiroute customers will continue to use their software as normal, with the same great level of customer service and support. We want the transition to be a smooth and considered process, with new and existing customers benefitting from an expanded team and greater investment in resources. We are excited to meet all of our new customers over the coming months and we will share regular updates as we progress on this journey. If you would like to talk to us about how this announcement impacts you, or how we can help with your transport management, please get in touch via [hello@365response.org](mailto:hello@365response.org)."

<https://365response.org/flexiroute-acquired-by-the-365-response-family/>





Steve Warburton, TAS Head of Operations, offers some thoughts on the Government's current bus policy...

### A Bright New Dawn or a Harbinger of Doom?

'Bus Back Better' was supposed to herald a new dawn of policy and spending in favour of the bus. It committed £3bn to get us there. Everywhere was going to have cheap fares and 'turn up and go' buses, just like London. The Government recognised that modal shift to buses was the quickest and most affordable way to reduce carbon emissions. All local authorities were pushed into producing a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) which would act as a quasi-bidding process for an unknown quantity of money to be awarded on an unknown basis at an unknown time, but any BSIP had better be 'ambitious'. Local papers have reported a string of 'initiatives' costing £millions.

But the emphasis on cheap fares and 'turn up and go' show clearly where the emphasis of 'Bus Back Better' lay, in dense urban areas, not in market towns or rural areas. The whole thing has the whiff of the big red bus passing Downing Street (or at least along Whitehall) every few minutes. Perhaps even that close to home that alarm bells should have rung, because TfL's steady erosion of city bus routes and frequencies is to see the flagship service 11 along Whitehall reduced to every twelve minutes, distinctly outside 'turn up and go' by most definitions.

John Atkins, who puts together the CT newsletter, has pointed out the scant mentions of CT in 'Bus Back Better' already. But, more worryingly, there is a similar dearth of reference and strategy applying to conventional buses in rural areas and even shire areas in general. Rural areas might 'benefit' from the introduction of DRT (which rings automatic alarm bells) and the shires could introduce 'Superbus' principles, although the latter remained undefined.

Now after the Autumn Budget we find that funding for BSIP fulfilment is £1.2bn rather than £3bn. A sum not to be sneezed at but potentially spread thinly across 87 local authorities where smaller unitaries are bidding for funds up against the 'big guns' in the Metropolitan conurbations within the 'levelling up' agenda. Depending on whose press report you read, Manchester alone has bid for upwards of £700m.

But the threat to rural and shire bus services goes beyond BSIPs as we progress into 2022. In five main fields:

- ⌋ The ending of Bus Recovery Grant;
- ⌋ Concessionary fares payments;
- ⌋ A review of BSOG;
- ⌋ The push towards DRT and
- ⌋ Driver shortages.

Hands up who remembers the Government statement that Bus Recovery Grant would continue to be paid for 'as long as it is needed.'? I do, it wasn't long ago – try page 38 of March's 'Bus Back Better'. But we learned in early October that it apparently will 'no longer be needed' from April next year. The confusion surrounding whether BSIPs should include replacing BRG or not has been nothing short of scandalous. But if it's not replaced, with actual passenger recovery between 50% and 80% of pre-Covid levels, what then? Pick from reduced frequency, raised fares or deregistrations. This squeezes the pips for both operators and LAs and goes against the whole purpose of 'Bus Back Better'. I can only hope for a U-turn on BRG, but that hope is dulled when considering HM Treasury's nervousness about the billions the DfT is sinking into the railway.

We're still in a twilight World for concessionary fares. 'Advice' from the DfT

(never an actual requirement) was to continue paying 2019 levels during the pandemic. But what after that? Return to a toolkit that is no longer fit for purpose? Evidence seems to show that the concessionary market remains one of the most depressed with a concentration now on essential journeys. The word 'essential' is the nub of the issue. The implication is that essential journeys would be made anyway. Thus all the old concepts of generated travel and reimbursement rates are null and void. But who measures the new level of generation and how? I foresee a battle between LAs wishing to stick to old figures and reduce payments and operators keen to prove the exact opposite. Concessionary travel makes up a far greater proportion of the rural and shire bus market, so the result of these negotiations is key to the future of many services.



The Treasury hates BSOG. It can't sit with a spreadsheet at the beginning of each year, type a number in a box and say 'that's how much we're spending on BSOG'. It doesn't work that way. In an environmentally-conscious World the status-quo is indefensible, as BSOG still effectively rewards high fuel consumption. Half-informed people and politicians see this clearly.

What they don't see is that there is still a clear link between BSOG and service supply. An operator is rewarded for providing more service, which is surely the right approach (and, incidentally, the simple approach taken in Scotland). In this relationship between miles operated and size of grant there is an implicit bias towards rural and interurban services which offer more miles in an operating day than their urban counterparts. Disrupt this pattern at your peril. The forthcoming

review of BSOG is looking at a range of options – suggestions have included giving a fixed grant to each LA or diverting BSOG to support the purchase of electric buses. Breaking the link between grant and service supply would sound a death knell for rural services. What use is a grant towards purchasing an electric bus if there's no service to use it on?

Then there's DRT, flavour of the month, especially among those who still believe there's such a thing as a financially self-supporting rural DRT. There is, it's Mister Jones with his village taxi (not available at school times), but with a full-size minibus, a waged driver and a dedicated back-office booking system? Don't make me laugh. Readers might like to look at Roger French's excellent blog

(<https://busandtrainuser.com/>). Roger has made a speciality of sampling DRT schemes across the UK and the same issues repeat time and again – low demand, lone passenger status, passengers wanting the same departure every day or every week. In the main newsletter we see a new CT initiative in Bungay. Surprise, surprise most people want to go into Bungay on market day. And there's the rub, bus or CT demand comes with regularity, same time to work, same day shopping, same day to the lunch club. If the lone DRT bus takes Mr A to the station every morning and Mr B to market every Thursday it can't respond to any other demand at those times. If it does, the regulars can't rely on it. So we can throw money at DRT to save trillions on supporting conventional buses, only to find that you don't serve your existing passengers as well as before and therefore only save money by not providing as much service.



Then finally we have driver shortages. This is something that won't go away any time

soon. Retirement of an ageing workforce and the departure of Eastern Europeans post-Brexit have both contributed to the crisis. Faced with insufficient staff there is no prospect of enhancing anything. In addition, if the issue persists, the first in the line of dominos to go will be the marginal rural route as operators concentrate on their 'bread and butter'.

Since the late 1980s, bus driving outside London has not been a high-paying occupation, but to attract new drivers this may have to change and that only results in higher costs. The concentration of shortages has been mainly in urban areas, but many rural operators have a bespoke threat – the exodus of city dwellers and growth in holiday lets means that workers on 'ordinary' wages can no longer afford to live nearby and what somebody driving for ten hours does not want is an hour's commute at either end.

So that's why I feel pessimistic about the post April 2022 rural network. Dear CT organisations, prepare for a whole new cohort of newly cut-off and isolated people needing transport.



If you require any advice or support please contact us on 01772-204988 or email [john.atkins@taspartnership.com](mailto:john.atkins@taspartnership.com)