



**Community
Transport at**



Community Transport Newsletter No.2 October 2020

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 of interest to the wider CT sector.

Senior Traffic Commissioner's Statutory Documents Updated

Updates have been made to *Statutory Document No. 6 Vocational Driver Conduct* which may impact on how CT operators manage their drivers. This guidance explains how the Senior Traffic Commissioner believes that Traffic Commissioners should interpret the law in relation to vocational driver conduct.

Traffic Commissioners for Great Britain states: "The directions are addressed to the Traffic Commissioners in respect of the approach to be taken by staff acting on behalf of individual Traffic Commissioners. They dictate the operation of delegated functions in relation to vocational driver conduct and provides suggested entry points for regulatory actions."

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/traffic-commissioners-vocational-driver-conduct-january-2016>



**Traffic Commissioners
for Great Britain**

CT Awards in Grampian

The **Grampian Volunteer Transport Awards** are seeking nominations for

outstanding CT volunteer drivers and escorts. Mearns Leader said: "The awards will highlight the vital role community transport plays in allowing people access to health and social care services in the north-east and the amazing work in the response to Covid-19. Nominations are sought under three categories: **Volunteer Driver of the Year, Volunteer Escort of the Year** and **Community Contribution of the Year.**

The awards are being supported by a variety of partners involved with the delivery of the **Grampian-wide Health & Transport Action Plan.** Health & Transport Action Plan Programme Manager, **Andrew Stewart**, said: "Community transport plugs many of the gaps in Scotland's transport system, providing over 3.5 million passenger journeys a year, usually for people who have no other means of getting about. Volunteers are at the heart of this effort. For every paid job in community transport there are at least five volunteers. I encourage everyone to nominate their volunteer transport heroes."

<https://www.mearnsleader.co.uk/business/call-nominations-grampian-volunteer-transport-awards-2020-2988851>



Funding for CT in Central Lancashire

The **Chorley Guardian** reports: "The organisations that provide a lifeline transport service for vulnerable and isolated residents across Central Lancashire say that they themselves have been thrown a lifeline by South Ribble and Chorley councils. The two authorities have each pledged £60,000 over the next three years to the groups which run the dial-a-ride facility across the neighbouring districts. **Dave Meggison**, manager of **Preston Community Transport** – which also operates around the Leyland area – said that the cash support would be invaluable, because of the additional costs of the precautions being

taken during the pandemic. "We're only operating at 50 per cent capacity as a result of social distancing and we're also spending a lot of our limited budget on things like hand sanitiser," he explained. 'But we have kept going right through the outbreak, because people still need their shopping or to get medical appointments. Life can't completely stop because of Covid and people will have no quality of life if they're permanently stuck at home.'

Central Lancashire Dial-a-Ride, which operates in other parts of South Ribble and across Chorley, also welcomed the 'generous' council funding and wants to raise awareness of the service amongst people who may benefit from it. 'Many members are not ready to go out yet and others are waiting for their clubs to be allowed to restart,' said manager Tracy Keating. 'The main thing is we are still here and ready to provide transport for members old and new.'

<https://www.chorley-guardian.co.uk/news/politics/chorley-and-south-ribble-demand-transport-services-given-cash-boost-2985604>



fflecsi Bus in Launched in North West Pembrokeshire From 'Pembroke Today'

Transport for Wales is surging ahead with its expansion of the fflecsi bus service to another part of Wales. In partnership with **Pembrokeshire Voluntary Transport (PVT)** and **Pembrokeshire County Council**, the new service was officially launched this week in North West Pembrokeshire. **fflecsi** is a semi-scheduled demand responsive bus service that has a fixed start and end destination, but is flexible and can adjust its route to pick-up and drop-off passengers anywhere within that fflecsi zone...**Lee Waters**, Deputy Minister for Economy and Transport, said: 'fflecsi is a way of setting up our transport system differently, giving passengers more control over how they get around. The initial signs are that these kind of services

are popular. We'll continue to learn from experiences in other parts of Wales to create efficient, convenient options as part of an integrated public transport system.' Through the managed booking system fflecsi also ensures that all passengers are guaranteed a seat and therefore assists with physical distancing measures. The safety of customers and colleagues is a priority for TFW and this new service ensures safety on public transport. **James Price**, Transport for Wales CEO, said:

'fflecsi is a very exciting trial for us as we continue to transform public transport in Wales. The ongoing covid-19 pandemic has had a direct impact on public transport and as we move forward the safety of our colleagues and customers continues to be our top priority'...**Margaret Vickery**, **Pembrokeshire Voluntary Transport** Chair, added: "Pembrokeshire Voluntary Transport (PVT) is delighted to be working with Transport For Wales (TFW) in a new fflecsi service operating in the St David's Peninsula. Friendly drivers alongside comfy seating with stunning views of our countryside as passengers travel in brand new buses. We are at the early stages of this service and look forward to it shaping up to meet local needs.'

<https://www.pembroke-today.co.uk/article.cfm?id=129548&headline=Fflecsi%20bus%20service%20now%20in%20Pembrokeshire&actionIs=news&searchyear=2020>



Community Transport Association Updates

CTA has uploaded four of its October online events to **YouTube**:

Online Event Recap: Good to Go, How to Run School Transport on 1 October was focused on "how to operate your school minibus in the current climate, ensuring any journeys are safe and COVID-secure."
<https://ctauk.org/recap-good-to-go-school-transport/>

Online Event Recap: Good to Go, Starting Back Up – Technical Advice on 9 October covered "what you need to consider before restarting your services.

From checking your permits are still valid to deciding how many passengers to carry on your vehicles, this session aimed to highlight some of the key things which you'll need to think about."

<https://ctauk.org/event-recap-starting-back-up/>

Online Event Recap: Meet the Minister, Northern Ireland on 14 October in which Nicola Mallon shares her vision for community transport.

<https://ctauk.org/event-recap-ni-meet-the-minister/>

Online Event Recap: Big Questions Big Ideas – on 15 October, how has coronavirus affected the way we serve and involve passengers in a safe and caring way?

<https://ctauk.org/event-recap-serving-passengers/>



The banner features the CTA logo (community transport association) on the left. To its right, a blue box says 'Online Events' and a yellow arrow points to 'Good to Go'. Below this is a grid of small images showing various community transport scenes. On the right side of the banner, text reads: 'Good to Go: Starting Back Up - Technical Advice', 'Our advice team cover the key things you need to consider when re-starting your services.', '09 October 11:00 - 12:00', and 'Find our full programme of online events at ctauk.org/online-events'.

CTA has also provided a briefing on the report published in September 2020 by **Danny Kruger** MP called *Levelling Up Our Communities: Proposals for a New Social Covenant*. CTA Chief Executive **Bill Freeman** commented: "Like most reports it was greeted with a mix of cautious welcoming and waiting to see the detail or how much gets adopted. We feel that way too. It does, however, contain important proposals that could reshape the context in which community transport works if enacted:

- A volunteer passport system, which would let individuals move between volunteering roles and would encourage work in local communities.
- Reforms to commissioning to make public spending create social value, leading to a more collaborative and trusting model of service design and commissioning.
- A 'Community Power Act' to give local people power over the design and delivery of public services.
- A new £500m Community Recovery Fund to help civil society during the current crisis, financed through the defunct National Fund.

- A new £2bn endowment, the Levelling Up Communities Fund, for investment in long-term, community-led initiatives."

<https://ctauk.org/briefing-levelling-up-report/>

The original report is here:

<https://www.dannykruger.org.uk/communities-report>

Drivers Returning to Duty

With some CT drivers now coming out of furlough, or volunteers returning, CT operators should consider providing some refresher training. This is especially important if a driver has been out of circulation for six months or more.

Welsh Border Community Transport back in Service

A Buckley-based CT has reminded its users that it has resumed services. **LeaderLive** reports: "A Flintshire charity that was left 'crippled' by the national lockdown has said they are back operating and helping the vulnerable across the county. The **Welsh Border Community Transport** charity has been operating in Buckley since 1991. Their main role is to transport elderly and vulnerable people in and around Flintshire to well-being, medicinal and other types of appointments. Manager **Ian McDermott** said all of their services were halted during the national lockdown on March 23, but services slowly began operating again back in August. He said: 'When we started back in August we began doing prescription pick-up and deliveries and foodbank deliveries in partnership with FLVC. We want people to know that we are still here. Back in lockdown, everything was halted, all of my staff were furloughed, and I was working from home most of the time. We had to suspend all of our operations. This was a real shame because before this happened, we were really busy. Things are picking up now though we are operating at about 35 per cent to what we were doing before lockdown...We do get money from Welsh Government but I'm worried that if this continues, we can't go on forever not bringing in any money. I haven't had to make anyone redundant and I'm hoping I don't have to but I do worry that if there's a second national lockdown and all my clients go back into shielding, then of course we will be back to where we were before. We will be operating just prescriptions and foodbank deliveries and I can't sustain a workforce with that. What

we do is important. We get people out and about who may not ordinarily be able to for a variety of different reasons. It helps their wellbeing and their mental help. It helps them with every day stuff that we take for granted such as travelling to the shop. We take away the worry of people getting from one place to the other.”

<https://www.leaderlive.co.uk/news/18801759.buckley-charity-says-still-operating-here-help-residents-across-flintshire/>

TRANSVOL in Thurrock in Lottery Success

YourThurrock declares: “Great news – **TRANSVOL** have received £48K from the **National Lottery Community Fund**. **TRANSVOL** manager **Denise Cheeseman**, applied and was delighted to receive the grant as a payment for re-establishing a true ‘Thurrock Dial-a-ride’. As many will know their service was decimated with cuts a few years ago, but has since been winning Council Contracts to transport disabled children to and from school. This has subsidised their volunteer runs up till now and last year they managed over 20,000 trips for their 1,500 members. They had been talking to their vulnerable members and they wanted to be able to come out of their houses in a safe way. **Neil Woodbridge** the Chair said ‘It’s hard with the virus, but just helping people to get their shopping or have a safe visit in their family bubble is a massive thing that we are proud to do as a charity’. If you know anyone who is isolated by way of transport – give Denise a ring on 01375 391 444”.

<https://www.yourthurrock.com/2020/10/06/thurrocks-community-bus-service-transvol-receives-key-funding/>

Trans Vol Community Transport

Thurrock's Community Transport

Trans-Vol is a Community Transport Project that utilises volunteer drivers and their cars to transport Members within the Thurrock area.

We also have a fleet of Wheelchair Accessible Minibuses.

Trips are available Monday to Friday and passengers are allowed two return trips per week (subject to driver availability).

01375 391444
www.transvol.co.uk

Booking Office Opening Hours
Monday - Friday
9.30am to 2.30pm

TRANS-VOL
thurrock.gov.uk

New COVID-19 Protection Measures

Route One has reported on two new products “aimed at protecting coach and bus operators, their staff and passengers during the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic. They include **SonoMask**, an ‘active’ mask designed to destroy the coronavirus, and **Aura Wi-fi**, a wi-fi solution designed to accommodate the **Aura-Air** purification system and a low-cost wi-fi upgrade for older coaches.”

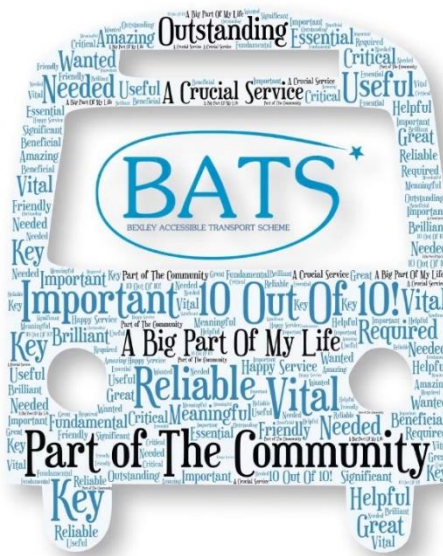
<https://www.route-one.net/news/two-new-products-to-protect-staff-and-passengers-during-covid-19/>



Bexley Accessible Transport Services launch New Website

Bexley Accessible Transport Services has launched its new website which details 12 services including **Hop 'n' Shop**, **Shop 'n' Drop** and **Health-on-Wheels**. The website was funded by **William Kendall's Charity**.

<https://bexleyct.co.uk/>



Lincoln Area DialaRide & the COVID Marshalls

After a few weeks of providing the COVID marshalling function at Lincoln Railway Station, Deputy Manager **Penny Hardman** has offered some reflections on the experience: "This was a government initiative arranged through the Charity **Volunteering Matters**. Everyone is different and during the 6 weeks volunteering we really have seen a cross section of the population of our City. *Firstly, WHY did we volunteer?* We wanted to help our community and also the charity that we either work or volunteer for. Our Charity is trying hard to keep supporting its registered users, who in many cases may only be able to access the city or get out of their homes with our support (we offer Community Transport, Shopmobility and Voluntary Car Services). By helping support the community in Volunteering we received much needed funds of just over £3K - those who were volunteering would be able to claim travel expenses and this would be taken from the amount. We had staff, volunteers, friends and family and also some of our registered users sign up to help. *What did we do?* We were provided with training information from **Volunteering Matters** and also the local Station Management. Everything was very thorough and well organised. We were there to remind people that face coverings were to be worn within the station and on the train. We stood away from the entrance, so not blocking anyone and keeping our distance. We did not challenge anyone only advised or thanked them if they were wearing a mask. Station staff did refuse to allow some passengers on trains, but this was not anything we had to be part of. The station Security Staff were also there if we needed them.



The Good. Our registered users had a purpose in helping and we have seen how they have gained confidence in themselves because they are supporting others. The team in the office (which is only a short distance away), have supported by driving later to take someone home when they have finished at 7pm and have taken drinks out to those at the station at 7am. The couple who came up and offered us chocolate. The many people who thanked us for providing a service. The passengers who thanked us for greeting them with a cheery " Good Morning" or Good Afternoon". The person that went to the shop and brought me a coffee (and I did not ask for one). The passenger that asked for the location of an opticians, as they had broken their glasses, it was after 6pm and they were told that everywhere would probably be closed, however on the way back they gave one of our volunteers a bunch of roses. The staff at the railway station that always asked if we were ok, did we need anything, and said hello to us. The many, many passengers that have thanked us for reminding them to wear their masks as they did not want to get a £100 fine. The school children who politely said "Good Morning" each time they entered the station. The chance we had to spend time with other staff and volunteers, who we don't normally chat to.



One of our registered users who we have previously said hello to as we booked out a scooter to him and thanked as he brought it back, is now going to do some more volunteering with us. The regular Commuters, who as the weeks have progressed have started chatting about the

weather and greeted us warmly. The feeling of being a part of a community. The feeling that we are helping in what is a difficult situation for everyone.

The fact we can help our own Charity.

The Bad. For some, the standing, we have had volunteers that have mobility issues and wheelchairs, electric wheelchairs, scooters, and walkers have been used, and we have all experienced tiredness. The passengers who are so engrossed in their phones and wearing headsets that they do not even notice us. We could have been wearing Gorilla suits and playing drums and they still would not have noticed us. The knowledge that there are people who say they have asthma or COPD, that may in my opinion have not had it, but have said so to avoid wearing a mask. Examples - two passengers one went through and said, "I have asthma" followed by another person that said, "I have what he has". Another passenger said they were exempt as they had OCD. The rain, although we are under shelter, but the torrential rain that happened on one day, no one got away without getting soaked. The quiet periods when there were no trains and one volunteer started counting paving stones.

The Angry. Being called a Nazi Stormtrooper. Being told "F*#@#k off" although the person later came back and apologised, they said they had had a bad day. Where people wear a Sunflower lanyard we did not approach them, however where the lanyard was not visible, under their jacket, in their pocket, in their bag, or hanging on wrist at the other side of them, we were unable to see them and some passengers took this OK, others stepped towards us thrust the card in our faces and said "Can't you read" "I'm exempt" or just grunted. Being shouted at and feeling intimidated with fingers pointed at you, close to your face and feeling very grateful that there are always two of you volunteering.



Would we do it again? - I would, but for some volunteers it was not for them. The Good far outweighed the Bad and the Angry together. Those who were Angry may have had reasons, but we did not react or answer back, and they went into the station and continued with their travel. We hope that our volunteering has helped people to think about their actions and realise we were there to support the community, at the time of writing this we have another 13 shift or 52 hours to stand outside the station, and hope that the Good continues to increase and we will miss being a part of everyone's daily commute. If I could get a message to everyone it would be, please be polite, we cannot read a small card from two metres, hold out your lanyard if you are exempt, get a lanyard if you are exempt. Have a go at volunteering, you can make a difference..... and please do not get angry with us." **Lincoln DialaRide** provided the marshalling service up until 22 September.

<http://lincolndialaride.co.uk/>

UK Space Agency & Community Transport!

Business Cloud writes: "The **UK Space Agency** has backed a healthcare drone start-up founded by **NHS** staff, to help in the response to COVID-19. **Apian**, part of the **NHS Clinical Entrepreneur Programme**, aims to establish a network of secure air corridors for electric drones which can carry COVID-19 samples, test-kits and PPE. The UK Space Agency is also backing a mobile app that will use satellite technology to provide access to community transport for people wishing to go to and from COVID care providers, and those looking to participate in community sport.

DriverNet will use **AI** to batch patients by their geolocation and encourage transport sharing, potentially reducing the 15 million missed NHS appointments each year. NHS workers and patients will get a notification through text or on their app when shuttle services are available in their area."

<https://www.businesscloud.co.uk/news/uk-space-agency-backs-healthcare-drone-start-up-founded-by-nhs-staff/>



Dorset CT Re-introduces Bridport Service

Dorset CT has commenced operation of a bus service that was curtailed in March due to the pandemic. **Dorset Echo** reports: "Dorset Community Transport has stepped up to run the bus on the existing route and timetable on behalf of **Bridport Town Council**...Council leader **Cllr Dave Rickard** said: 'We are delighted to be working in partnership with a local operator, Dorset Community Transport, to get the bus up and running again. We know it's been invaluable to people who can't easily get into town and it's been a frustrating time while we've looked for a way to restore the service in the face of some challenging restrictions.' The bus serves residents of Allington, Bothenhampton, Bradpole, Bridport and Lower Walditch on Wednesdays and Saturdays, giving access to the town centre and Bridport market.

Tim Christian, general manager at Dorset Community Transport, said: 'We're excited to be adding this to our other community transport services in the Bridport area and looking forward to welcoming passengers on board our distinctive green minibus, helping people get out and about.'

<https://www.dorsetecho.co.uk/news/18769319.invaluable-bus-service-returns/>



Transport Self-Empowerment in Nigeria

A story of community transport in action in Jigawa State is reported by **Premium Times**: "Tired of waiting for the government to provide a basic health facility for their community, poor women in Baddo community in **Taura Local Government Area** of Jigawa State have done what they considered the next best thing – taxed themselves to buy a vehicle they now use as an ambulance in their

community. The women clustered into 21 groups of 20 members each and contributed N1,000 each for two months to buy a vehicle for taking any of them in labour to the nearest health facility 31 kilometres away from their community. The women made the contributions from the N5,000 they receive monthly from the federal government under the Conditional Cash Transfer scheme. The scheme was designed by the **Muhammadu Buhari** administration to assist poor households with a monthly stipend of N5,000. The beneficiaries are also trained and assisted in setting up small business. A leader of one of the clusters, **Hanne Hassan**, told **Premium Times** that they bought the vehicle for conveying women in labour to the nearest comprehensive health facility in the area. Mrs Hassan said the community is difficult to access due to its location, as a result of which there is often no vehicle coming in. It also has no health centre. She said the situation mostly affects women in labour and those who have complications in their pregnancies. 'We have to go to neighbouring communities to get commercial vehicles to take us to hospitals. We used to rely on a vehicle donated by the state government under former Governor **Sule Lamido** but it is grounded following an accident,' Mrs Hassan said. 'Since the vehicle was grounded, some women have died during labour, and many unborn babies also died due to delayed operations,' she said. Mrs Hassan said the women in two months contributed about N900,000 while other community members donated N100,000. She also said because the vehicle they bought is the only one in the community, other people with emergency sickness also use it to get to the health facility. 'Every household in the community can use the vehicle to convey their pregnant mother to the nearest health facility as far as the head of the household can fuel the car and settle the driver,' she said. She, however, lamented that despite the women's sacrifice to get the vehicle on the road and their other struggles, state government officials have not been sympathetic. 'Despite our efforts, highways officials normally stop the vehicle asking for particulars thinking that it is a commercial vehicle. This causes delay in conveying women in labour to the maternity, and has led to the death of one woman,' Mrs Hassan said."

<https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/417075-how-poor-jigawa-women-in-neglected-community-contributed-money-to-buy-ambulance.html>



New Buchan Dial-a-Community Bus Pilot

Evening Express in Aberdeenshire reports that the: "The **Be-Link'D** pilot scheme has been set up by the **Buchan Dial-a-Community Bus** to meet the needs of people in rural communities who cannot access public transport. It is available Monday-Friday, with the first pick-up at 9am and the final drop-off at 3.30pm. Buchan community planning officer **Maureen Stephen** described the pilot as 'a fantastic opportunity to try to meet the transport needs of our rural communities...We know that a lack of transport contributes to people's feelings of isolation, so in these challenging times, enabling people to stay connected is more important than ever. The key to the project's success will be in clearly demonstrating that there is sufficient support within the community to make the service financially sustainable.' Clients who are already registered with the Buchan Dial-a-Community Bus for the **T4U** service will not be eligible to use the new scheme. **Jayne Fraser**, finance manager with Buchan Dial-a-Community Bus said: 'We are delighted to be involved with this pilot because it fits well with the services already being provided by our organisation. This is also an exciting opportunity for us to work more closely with other service providers. All the required adaptations to our buses have been undertaken to allow people to travel safely and we are looking forward to welcoming our new passengers.'"

<https://www.eveningexpress.co.uk/fp/news/local/new-transport-initiative-launched-for-north-east-communities/>



Exmouth CT Wins National Lottery Grant

East Devon News reports "Lifeline community transport combatting loneliness in the Exmouth area has been granted £30,000 to boost its service. **Exmouth and District Community Transport**, which celebrates 30 years in November, has been awarded the **National Lottery** fund to pay for pub lunch trips after a trial proved successful. Thanks to the funds, 'Ring and Ride' bus service users can book meal trips to restaurants and pubs, and enjoy company when they eat. We continue to provide the essential transport that ensures people in the local community are not left alone and isolated.' To use the service or volunteer, call 01275 855552, or email office@ndct.co.uk."

<https://www.northsomersettimes.co.uk/news/nailsea-company-deliver-3-000-medicines-during-crisis-1-6870924>



Rural Commission in North Yorks looks at Transport

North Yorkshire County Council has reported on its **Rural Commission**: "The Rural Commission, established by North Yorkshire County Council and the first of its kind nationally, is an independent panel of experts tasked with helping to turn the tide of rural decline and recommend ways to help some of North Yorkshire's most rural communities grow and prosper. Despite the restrictions due to Covid-19, the panel has continued to meet virtually in recent months and over the last three weeks has met twice to consider two fundamental issues for the sustainability of rural life – transport and education... Two weeks ago, the Rural Commission sat to examine transport issues and took evidence from senior managers in the national rail network right through to community transport groups. They heard that the current UK transport model is too old and too urban centred and too fragmented and does not take account of the rural dimension. They also heard a whole series of local solutions from community groups who run community transport such as the **Little White Bus**, which runs scheduled services through the Upper Dales and demand-responses services run by community support organisations like **Nidderdale Plus**. Commissioners have now agreed to look at more evidence from national best practice in other local UK councils as well as rural transport models in the Netherlands, Sweden and Germany. They agreed that a national voice for the county as well as strong communities were vital to power forward this rural region." <https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/news/article/commissioners-delve-challenges-faced-rural-schools-and-transport>



Community Hero Award for Wealdlink CT

Wealden MP **Nusrat Ghani** has presented two **Wealden Hero Awards** to two East

Sussex organisations in her constituency **Crowborough Foodbank** and **Wealdlink CT**. *In Your Area* reports: "**Alison Homewood, Eduardo Angeleri, Mark Symons** and **Paul Kemp** work at Wealdlink, a community transport charity that offers services including door-to-door transport, community trips and scheduled bus services. Wealdlink is largely operated by volunteers and enables the elderly to travel across North Wealden and maintain their independence. At the beginning of lockdown, Eduardo set up a shopping and delivery service through Wealdlink. With the support of the trustees, the operations manager, and help and hard work from Alison, Paul, Mark and other volunteers, Wealdlink have helped many of Wealden's elderly residents who were unable to venture to the shops. Nearly 400 shopping trips have been completed and 3,500 miles travelled across North Wealden with deliveries. As part of this service, volunteers were also collecting and delivering prescriptions, and taking passengers to medical appointments. Although many passengers have now returned to the buses, Wealdlink continues to offer shopping and delivery services. For more information, please visit: www.4weald.co.uk. Nus Ghani said: 'Our communities have been at their most vulnerable over the last few months. The Crowborough Foodbank team and the Wealdlink team have done an amazing job in adapting their services to the situation and accommodating for the needs of the most vulnerable people in the community. They have organised much-needed support and helped thousands of people across the constituency. I am delighted to present all these wonderful volunteers with the Wealden Hero Award and to celebrate their efforts.'"

<https://www.inyourarea.co.uk/news/crowborough-foodbank-recognised-for-their-support/>



Community Transport Sussex Safety Video

Community Transport Sussex has posted an impressive short film on **Facebook** to let its users "know the steps we are taking to keep our passengers and colleagues safe!" You can view the film here:

<https://www.facebook.com/1682688672043916/videos/2670315319904526>



Knutsford CT in Cheshire receives Funding Lifeline

"Affordable transport for the elderly and vulnerable in Knutsford has been secured for the future," says **Knutsford Guardian**.

"**Knutsford Community Transport Association (KCTA)** has received funding from the Government's **Coronavirus Community Support Fund**, distributed by **The National Lottery Community Fund**.

This will help to secure the future of its services to its member organisations in and around Knutsford. For nearly 20 years KCTA has provided affordable transport to not-for-profit voluntary organisations serving the needs of the elderly and vulnerable in the Knutsford area, in the main people who are socially and economically-deprived. KCTA treasurer **John Mills** said: 'Many of these groups would themselves be unsustainable should KCTA cease to operate, as commercial transport in Knutsford is not fully accessible for groups of disabled people.' Due to Covid-19 restrictions none of KCTA's member groups have met since March, and with many of their members being over 70, it is not anticipated they will begin to meet again until well into 2021. John added:

'Consequently, KCTA will not receive any significant income in its financial year, April 2020 to March 2021. In order to keep the cost of using the minibus affordable to the user groups KCTA's charging policy is to recover only operating costs, while

maintaining an operating reserve of one year's income. Fixed operating costs can be met, but with little or no income expected in this financial year this would leave an unsustainable reserve. Our successful application to the Government's Support Fund to meet this year's fixed operating costs has therefore secured the future of KCTA's services.'

<https://www.knutsfordguardian.co.uk/news/18781697/funding-secures-future-knutsford-community-transport-group/>



Oswestry Dial A Ride raises Funds for New Vehicle

Shropshire Live reports that "Oswestry Dial A Ride has received over £12,000 in donations and funding as part of their **Buy Us A Bus Campaign**. The Buy Us A Bus campaign, launched in October 2019 by **Oswestry Community Action (Qube)** started with a target to raise £10,000 to help fund a new vehicle for their Dial A Ride service which is used by members who need transport to and from appointments and activities in the Oswestry area. By January 2020 they had not only exceeded their original target but had also managed to raise awareness of their community transport service and the key role it plays in the local community. Transport Supervisor **Michelle Kelsall** said: 'This is the first time we have ever launched a campaign of this kind and we really had no idea how it would work out but we have been totally overwhelmed by the generosity of people and organisations locally. We set the target at £10,000 in the hope we might raise some of that but with a couple of larger donations we managed to raise more than we had hoped possible.' She went on to say 'Keeping our fleet on the road is an expensive service and we need to make

sure that our vehicles are safe, tidy and accessible. Being able to update one of our vehicles means that we can continue to provide this much needed service for our members.' Chief Officer of Qube, **Laurel Roberts** added: 'We would like to express our sincere thanks to everyone who was able to contribute to the fundraising. It was a very positive project for us all and has, once again, highlighted how valuable our Dial A Ride service is to Oswestry and the surrounding areas. Covid 19 caused some delays in getting the new vehicle on the road but we are pleased that it is now in regular use and making a difference to so many people in our community.'"

<https://www.shropshirelive.com/news/2020/10/12/oswestry-dial-a-ride-launches-new-vehicle-thanks-to-local-community/>



Innovative Funding by Wychavon District Council Supports CT Projects

Droitwich Standard has reported that "Funding has been provided to a number of Wychavon community projects supporting the ongoing response to the Covid-19 crisis. In July, **Wychavon District Council** launched an initiative in partnership with crowdfunding platform **Spacehive**. The initiative, '**Crowdfund Wychavon**', offered people a way to raise funds by connecting them with local causes. A pot of £25,000 was made available to support 50 per cent of the cost of projects, up to £5,000. And eight projects, including **Droitwich Spa CVS**, were successful in reaching their crowdfunding targets. They received a total of £12,217 from the council as well as donations from 174 backers, including communities, local businesses and foundations. The remaining amount from the council pot will be linked in with **Worcestershire County Council's** fund which is called **Crowdfund**

Worcestershire. Droitwich Spa CVS raised £9,545 to continue to provide help to the most vulnerable people in the community. This will be done by implementing Covid-19 safety measures in their community transport, re-open their building and to hire a Project Co-ordinator... The next round of funding aims to support innovative and sustainable community transport projects across the district. The council has made a pot of £150,000 available over the next three years (across six rounds of funding) to support these initiatives.

<https://droitwichstandard.co.uk/news/wychavon-community-projects-including-droitwich-spa-cvs-receive-covid-funding/>



MBE for CT Volunteer in Surrey Heath

Surrey Live has reported on a local volunteer **Aline Poulter** who has received an MBE: "Aline Poulter gives up her free time to fight social isolation A Surrey Heath council worker who lifts spirits wherever she goes has been honoured with an MBE. Aline Poulter, who single-handedly set up a Saturday club at a day centre for older residents, has been recognised for her services to vulnerable and older people.

Tim Pashen, acting chief executive at **Surrey Heath Borough Council** (SHBC), said: 'As many of our residents have experienced, a visit from Aline is a welfare check, social occasion, mood-lifter and meal delivery wrapped up in a smile. She is a hugely valued and respected member of staff, who treats everyone who uses community services as she would members of her own family.' Mrs Poulter is committed to reducing social isolation, not only in her role as community services operations manager, but also in the many hours of voluntary work she does at evenings and weekends. She runs a Saturday Club at **Windle Valley Centre** in Bagshot in her own time, giving carers and

the cared-for a chance to interact and take part in dementia-friendly activities. Mrs Poulter also drives a community transport bus to and from the club, which is described by members as 'a lifesaver', and the highlight of their week. Since the Covid-19 pandemic hit, Mrs Poulter and her team have kept in touch with many who would normally attend the club, through phone calls and Meals at Home deliveries that double as welfare checks. She even delivers lunches to Meals at Home clients on Christmas Day before sitting down to eat with her family. Mrs Poulter, who lives in Bagshot and has worked for the borough council for 14 years, said: 'People like me don't usually get these kind of awards. I come to work because I enjoy what I do, I don't expect to get any extra recognition for it. The reaction of the people that come along is more than enough reward for me.'

<https://www.getsurrey.co.uk/news/surrey-news/mbe-awarded-surrey-heath-council-19099575>



BEM for Dial-a-Ride Driver in London

Transport Network reports: "TfL employee, **Ibrar Akram**, who works for **London Dial-a-Ride**, was awarded the British Empire Medal (BEM). London Mayor **Sadiq Khan** said: 'It's great to see Ibrar Akram and **Mike Brown** [former TfL commissioner] recognised for their outstanding work and contribution to London. Akram's inspiring adaptation of the Dial-a-Ride service during the coronavirus pandemic ensured food and deliveries continued to reach the most vulnerable Londoners and our essential workers, and is a testament to the values of community and support that lie at the heart of our city.'" **LondonTV** added: "When lockdown was announced, Akram, from Thornton Heath, worked quickly to adapt Dial-a-Ride

services from providing transport to enable older and disabled people to get around London to using it to deliver food and shopping to them. He organised and led the support effort from Dial-a-Ride, partnering with the **London Emergency Planning Group** (LEPG) to identify where help was most needed. In April of this year, he personally designed the support programme to get deliveries to essential workers and vulnerable people. Initially, the programme worked to get 100 deliveries of personal protective equipment (PPE) to different NHS hubs, but within a few days he made further arrangements to manage and schedule deliveries across the London borough of Newham to carry around 130 food trips and up to 350 pharmaceutical deliveries a day. This later expanded to include up to 450 shopping parcels to vulnerable Londoners who were unable to leave their homes."

<http://www.transport-network.co.uk/Brown-signs-off-with-a-gong-as-Queen-honours-COVID-heroes/16887>
<https://london-tv.co.uk/tfl-staff-recognised-in-the-queens-birthday-honours/>



CIL Support for CT in West Lancs is out for Consultation

West Lancashire District Council is "asking residents for their views on what the **Community Infrastructure Levy** (CIL) monies should be spent on. The CIL allows the council to raise funds from developers who are undertaking new building projects in the Borough. The money can then be reinvested into infrastructure to support new developments. Each year, the council shortlists a number of projects which receive some of the funding [including this year] £31,555 to fund the **Dial-a-Ride** transport service for a year. Some of the CIL money collected is retained for use in

the area the development is based within, and is often passed to a parish council. <https://www.inyourarea.co.uk/news/west-lancashire-borough-council-want-your-opinion/>

West Lancashire DIAL A RIDE

£2m Investment in New Minibuses on Isle of Man

"**Bus Vannin** has spent just under £2m on new minibuses in the past five years", reports **IOMToday**. "And £5.64m has been paid out on its bus replacement programme in three years. This year, Bus Vannin took delivery of the six new hybrid Citaro single deckers and the 10 StreetDeck double deckers. The double deckers stood idle at Bank's Circus weeks after they were delivered, pending inspection, fitting of equipment and driver training. Bus Vannin now has a fleet of 43 minibuses, of which 12 are equipped to work for **ConnectVillages** and **ConnectPorts** services. Four out of eight minibuses delivered this year are equipped for use for dial-a-ride but only three of the 12 are used daily for ConnectVillages. Minibuses are also used for patient transfer and educational transport. Others are used by care homes, civil defence, police, probation and the fire service."

<http://www.iomtoday.co.im/article.cfm?id=58339&headline=Bus%20Vannin%20spent%20%C2%A32m%20on%20minibuses§ionIs=NEWS&searchyear=2020>



To conclude this newsletter, **TAS** Director **John Taylor** has contributed this 'Think Piece'. We would welcome any comments or feedback. John has been one of the pre-eminent practitioners of accessible, flexible and community-based transport in UK since 1977, with early experience encompassing the design, operational, legal and technical aspects of CT. His consultancy career

stretches back to 1986; before joining **TAS** in 1994, John was a freelance consultant specialising in community, rural and accessible transport.



Judicial Review one year on – where next for the CT sector? asks John Taylor

Next month sees the anniversary of the Judicial Review brought by the **Bus & Coach Association** against the **Department for Transport** where, if truth be told, the Court failed to provide, or possibly deliberately withdrew from providing, a clear answer to the issues raised around non-profit trading activities whilst operating under a permit. After years of increasingly vituperative charge and counter charge and, fortunately rare, skirmishes with **DVSA** and one or two more ideologically driven police forces, a failed attempt to call in State Aid as an issue with the European Commission and then nine months of legal preparation producing several inches thick of court papers, we are still well short of a workable determination. Meanwhile the legal costs for the parties involved must have exceeded £250,000, many CTs have put their development plans on hold and a few have given up and closed down. Without disrespecting the annual poppy season, there is an analogy here to the utter waste of trench warfare and the personal and collective pain and effort required to make what turned out to be miniscule territorial gains.

I do not expect the forthcoming guidance from the Department for Transport to provide an answer. This is not because of incompetence but because the issues raised are not capable of simple resolution. The narrow principle at issue is one of motivation or intention. Any court observer will know how hard it is to determine this objectively. What is commerciality? Must it include a conventional profit motive or does it cover any form of market trading? Moving away from a legal perspective, what is the policy case for differentiated standards for passenger transport operation?

If we cannot resolve these questions, there is a significant danger that we will end up back in court again.

There are two new factors that may help in diverting us from this pit. In the longer term, Brexit removes the interest of European institutions in this domestic squabble. Although for the time being we will be subject to existing Directives and Regulations, the way these are interpreted will become a UK issue, especially as there is absolutely no cross-border impact from Permit operation.

More immediately, the impact of COVID-19 has brought the fragility of a number of our market based systems, including passenger transport, into the spotlight. This is stimulating a move towards new planning, commissioning and mechanisms with a greater emphasis on social needs and local democratic control. This suggests that commissioning agencies, including transport, education and social care authorities, need to take more responsibility in determining the conditions for local procurement. It also calls into question the effectiveness or appropriateness for either DVSA or the Traffic Commissioners to be intervening in what is essentially an issue of social procurement.

None of this lets the CT sector off the regulatory hook. The Permit system is a privilege granted to those organisations focused on mitigating market failure and which are not incentivised to shortcut safety or quality issues. The sector today has a much broader reach than it had in the 1970s when the regulatory system was developed and has a range of new

constitutional, governance and trading models. The interaction between these and the Permit system is not always transparent – for example, should a non-charitable CIC benefit from Permit use when its managers may determine their own pay? It is understandable that the sector's greater involvement in statutory transport provision has brought CTs into conflict with companies operating in the same markets but under a different regulatory regime.

The DfT has for many years been promising a review of the Permit system. The sector needs this as a means to extract itself from the current impasse. But such a review needs to be holistic, looking at how the regulatory framework sits alongside funding and commissioning. I worry that this may fall into the DfT's 'too hard' box, and we will have to sort the problem out ourselves.



Is this the route to the future for CT following DfT's new guidance on Permit Legislation?

In tackling this, the sector should be mindful that successful conflict resolution requires acknowledging and even empathising with the other side's position – albeit whilst not agreeing with it. There is a real issue at stake for some small PSV and private hire operators who have come to see the CT sector as an existential threat. Adopting the moral high ground is not helpful in these circumstances and positively counter-productive when the sector has its own, albeit small, share of operators who don't uphold the expected standards.

The CT sector's strength lies in its ability to create and demonstrate social value and this will be key to carving out a defensible position in the future. But a simple reliance

on being 'not-for-profit' is not enough to demonstrate such value. We need to develop a clearer framework for counting and assessing the social benefits and one that can be properly incorporated into the commissioning process in ways that will channel CT operators into continuous improvement, of service outcomes and standards.

The past forty years have seen a steady reduction in both status and funding for passenger transport in bus, coach and minibus. More than anything else this has triggered the conflict with the BCA as the different parties fight over slices from a diminishing cake. It would be more productive if we were to argue for a bigger cake.



If you require any advice or support please contact us on 01772-204988 or email john.atkins@taspартnership.com