



**Community
Transport at**



Community Transport Newsletter No.4 December 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.

COVID-19 Vaccinations & Community Transport

Most CT operators will be aware of the need to ensure that all members of the community have access to the COVID-19 vaccination programme. There is also a renewed effort to increase testing (which might entail the need to visit a testing site) as well as the continued roll out of flu jabs. Most users of Dial-a-Ride services will no doubt look to their CT provider for transport. Additionally there will be a large number of individuals in the higher risk categories who need to travel to vaccination and test centres, who may need to call upon CT services for the first time. This is a situation that is likely to continue for several months into 2021.

There is a logistical challenge in accommodating these additional trips that each CT that opts to participate will have make provision for. There is an even bigger challenge in raising awareness of the CT resource and how it can assist at this time, both amongst vulnerable individuals who would be eligible for services such as Dial-a-Ride (and who are not current users) and amongst the **NHS** practitioners who are booking appointments and may need to

signpost patients to local CT services. This is a real dilemma as we know some of the vaccination centres are in places that are hard to reach without a car, and the choice of locations has not always been made with public transport in mind.

Ideally, when people are called in for vaccinations, they should be asked if they need assistance with transport, and one of the options might well be a CT service. The bookings staff should know about the CT(s) covering their locality so that if someone says "How do I get there?" they can be signposted. Similarly, if they send out any confirmation or joining instructions, these should give the CTs' contact number(s). Some NHS services (hospitals, GPs) may already be aware of local CT and have adequate information to pass on to enquirers. Many, however, will not be aware of the services and may be unable to assist. There is a real possibility of some people being unable to meet appointments due to transport problems, and being put at risk due to delays.

Some CTs in different parts of the UK have already engaged with their local NHS at **CCG / Health Board** level and have been funded to provide specific dedicated services to get people to vaccination centres. These are local arrangements and we are not aware of any policy at national level relating to specialist transport.

On a practical level, CT providers should bear in mind two things if taking passengers to vaccination centres:

- Two vaccinations are required, around three weeks apart, and
- Following each vaccination, they will be required to remain at the vaccination centre for around 15 minutes in case of any adverse reaction.



The **Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI)** has defined the cohort categories for vaccinations in the following order of priority for the UK:

1. Residents in a care home for older adults and their carers;
2. All those 80 years of age and over and frontline health and social care workers;
3. All those 75 years of age and over;
4. All those 70 years of age and over and clinically extremely vulnerable individuals;
5. All those 65 years of age and over;
6. All individuals aged 16 years to 64 years with underlying health conditions which put them at higher risk of serious disease and mortality;
7. All those 60 years of age and over;
8. All those 55 years of age and over; and
9. All those 50 years of age and over.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/priority-groups-for-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-advice-from-the-jcvi-2-december-2020/priority-groups-for-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-advice-from-the-jcvi-2-december-2020>

The message given out initially is that qualifying individuals should wait to be notified for an appointment and not attempt to contact NHS services themselves.

There is a strong argument that CT drivers and assistants should be vaccinated as a category 2 priority.

ENGLAND

There are a number of ways in which vaccinations are to be given, initially:

- **Care Homes** – for category 1 individuals the vaccine will be administered directly to the individual at the residence, so no transport problems are likely. However, there has been some concern that some care homes may not have the deep-freeze storage capability, and that some residents may have to travel to a hospital or GP location;
- **Hospital Hubs** – which will offer vaccinations to eligible individuals aged 80 years of age from existing outpatients lists who are already planning to attend hospital, and to clinically appropriate inpatients aged 80 and over who are being discharged home. Many of these individuals will

have qualified for NEPTS or have made arrangements for what is a pre-existing appointment.

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/publication/week-1-implementing-the-covid-vaccination-programme-4-december-2020/>. Hospital Hubs will also offer the vaccines to Care Home staff.

- **GP Surgeries** – many GPs have entered into an agreement with NHS England for Enhanced Service (ES) provision and the specification is published here: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/12/C0917-Covid-19-Enhanced-Service-ES-Specification-v.2-4-December-2020-1.pdf>

This initial approach is that the GPs will contact eligible patients and call them into a **Designated Site** (which may or may not be the usual surgery premises). There is a specification for what constitutes a Designated Site, but transport is not explicitly mentioned in this context. Designated Sites will not necessarily be chosen for their links to public transport or even easy accessibility by car.



It should be noted that the specification states that "Each GP practice participating in this ES will:

- "5.1.6 take reasonable steps to provide information (supplementary to national communications) to Patients about the services pursuant to this ES, including information on how to access the services [our italic] and any changes to them" and
- "9.10 GP practices should ensure that services are accessible, appropriate and sensitive to the needs of all Patients. No eligible Patient shall be excluded or experience particular difficulty in

accessing and effectively using this ES due to a protected characteristic, as outlined in the Equality Act (2010) – this includes Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex or Sexual Orientation.”

The above two clauses create an obligation on the part of the GP to ensure that patients are provided with information on how to reach the premises and can gain physical access to the premises. For the former, they will need to provide transport information for those who have no access to private transport or would have difficulty using public transport. The GP may already have information about local CT provision but many will not. It is also possible that the bookings will be managed centrally by new staff who do not necessarily have awareness of local transport services.

This creates a challenge for each CT to make itself known to the GPs who are offering the vaccines so that patients can be directly signposted to a CT provider at the time of making the appointment. Some CTs may already have good contacts at GPs or at CCG level and so be able to make clear the availability of CT services. For those making contact for the first time, there is no single ideal way of doing this.

The obvious approaches would be:

- **Call the surgery by phone** – the conversation really would need to be with the practice manager but it may not be so easy to engage with them over the phone. Many GPs are managing call traffic in a way that discourages any kind of peripheral or non-medical enquiry;
- **Send materials though the post** – this is always worthwhile but there is a risk that any letter or publicity will not be passed on to correct person and could be discarded as a sales circular or junk mail;
- **Email** – getting an email address of a GP surgery can be hit or miss. Some do provide an admin or contact email, but even so this could end up being treated as spam;
- **Delivering materials by hand** – if you can get access to a reception desk (at a less busy time) there is a chance that

you could get a letter or publicity material to the best person. However, this would be a time consuming process (an average sized town will have around 30 locations), and many surgeries have only been open to those pre-appointed with a medical need;

- **Use of any wider networks or groups** that you are involved with where there is a known NHS representative (e.g. **Local Resilience Forum**) – it is possible that they could assist in getting the message through to the best person. If you know someone at CCG level, this is generally the best level to make an approach if you have not already done so.
- **General use of media** – instigate an awareness campaign in the local media about the fact that people could miss a vital vaccination if they don't know about their local CT and to ensure that people in difficulty know to contact you, and also in hope that the vaccination bookings teams take notice.

Generally, now is the time to:

- update your contact information for all GP surgeries in your area so that you can send out a mail merge communication (i.e. hold the information in a properly structured spreadsheet if it isn't in your transport management software in a form that can be exported as a .csv file) and
- update your media contact information in a similar format so you can do a mass email out

Other useful links:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/covid-19-vaccination-programme/>
<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/covid-19-vaccination-programme/key-vaccination-information/>
<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/publication/standard-operating-procedure-covid-19-local-vaccination-services-deployment-in-community-settings/>

A drive-through vaccination centre at **Hyde Leisure Centre** in Greater Manchester is reported on **msn.com**. This includes the following: “The Hyde site is a drive-through model but chiefs are advising that, where possible, people who need the vaccine are not the ones driving. However, if a resident does not have someone to drive them to the hub they will be able to park up and walk through to receive the vaccine and

then wait in their car for 15 minutes afterwards."

This poses the inevitable question – *if you don't drive and don't have anybody to drive you, what then?*

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/uknews/drive-thru-vaccine-hub-opens-with-priority-patients-getting-jab-behind-the-wheel/ar-BB1bYF4C?item=flights%3Aprg-enterpriseblended-t%2C1s-ent-microsoft&ocid=entnewsntp>



SCOTLAND

NHS Scotland has stated "Vaccinations are taking place differently across Scotland to reflect the needs of local communities. Your coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccination may not take place at your GP practice. Your **NHS Health Board** will confirm local arrangements."

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/immunisation/vaccines/coronavirus-covid-19-vaccine/when-and-where-you-will-get-your-coronavirus-vaccinations>

The initial phase in Scotland will include:

- **Care Homes** – arrangements same as for England above;
- **Vaccination Hubs** – have been set up in 23 hospitals and 17 mass vaccination centres are planned including the Edinburgh International Conference Centre (EICC).

The list of Hubs is reported here:

<https://www.edinburghlive.co.uk/news/uk-world-news/full-list-scotlands-coronavirus-vaccine-19450931>

CTs should contact their local NHS health board or the sites directly to indicate any availability – see **England** section above for suggested approaches. Many of the hospitals already have local transport information on their websites (all should

have decent public transport links) but may not be aware of local CT provision.

NORTHERN IRELAND

The initial phase in NI will include:

- **Care Homes** – Mobile vaccination teams operating from Trust centres will take the vaccine to residents and staff in care homes across Northern Ireland.
- **Vaccination Centres** – confirmed so far Belfast Trust – Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast; South Eastern Trust – Ulster Hospital, Dundonald; Southern Trust – South Lake Leisure Centre, Craigavon; Northern Trust – Seven Towers Leisure Centre, Ballymena; Western Trust – Foyle Arena, Londonderry, Omagh Leisure Centre, Omagh; and Lakeside Leisure Centre, Enniskillen.

CTs should contact these sites and outline any availability – see **England** for suggested approaches. Many of the hospitals already have local transport information on their websites (all should have decent public transport links) but may not be aware of local CT provision.

Useful links:

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/covid-19-coronavirus/northern-ireland-covid-19-vaccination-programme>

WALES

The **Welsh NHS Health Boards** have launched vaccination programmes based in hospitals and are providing direct provision to care homes. As in **Scotland**, contacting the Health Board would be the first priority.

Useful links:

<https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/immunisation-and-vaccines/covid-19-vaccination-information/>
<https://gov.wales/coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-programme>
<https://gov.wales/covid-19-vaccine-roll-out-begins-wales>

GENERAL

If you struggle to engage with the NHS locally, it is worth an approach through the **Local Resilience Forum**, where the NHS are represented. Even if you reach a local agreement with the NHS or GPs to support the vaccination programme, it is important to ensure that the Local Resilience Forum is kept in the loop. Local Resilience Forum (and equivalent for Wales, Scotland and NI) contacts: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-resilience-forums-contact-details>

VASA Service Continues but Volunteers are Needed

The **Leamington Observer** reports that "A Community transport service will continue to run during lockdown for Warwickshire residents with medical appointments.

Ahead of the second lockdown, local charity **VASA** has reviewed the guidance to ensure those who need to get to their medical appointments are still able to do so. Charity manager **Kirsty Holder** said: "It is important to remember that the NHS is not closed for business, they are actively encouraging patients to seek help when needed and attend their appointments and we are here to support this. We are confident that our community transport service, running across Rugby borough and Stratford and Warwick districts is able to continue offering safe, affordable transport for those who need to get to medical appointments during this time. We are fortunate that the Public Health team at **Warwickshire County Council** were able to support us earlier in the year to ensure that we could keep our passengers and amazing army of volunteers safe.' The charity's volunteers have signed up to new procedures including a cleaning regime carried out before and after each journey, and PPE including hand sanitiser is provided to all volunteers. Passengers must be seated in the back of the car with face coverings which are provided by the charity if needed. Transport manager **Ali Gravestock** added: 'We also need more volunteers to help us, even if it's just over the lockdown period, just an hour or two can make a huge difference to our clients.'

Email transport@vasa.org.uk for both booking and volunteering enquiries."

<https://leamingtonobserver.co.uk/news/charity-will-continue-to-transport-warwickshire-residents-to-medical-appointments-24902/>



vasa Home Services Volunteer News Contact

Covid-19 Updates

Following Government guidance and with help from the public health team, VASA is now able to resume our community transport service for essential journeys for medical appointments, Memory Clubs, groups & activities remain temporarily suspended.

We have heard that Warwickshire will be placed in Tier 3 following the end of lockdown this week. As such we will be in a similar position, with Community Transport Service continuing to run in Rugby Borough and Stratford and Warwick districts. Our face to face services remain closed for the time being. We will follow all the guidance and review regularly to ensure a safe service.

Please review our news page for the latest information.

[More Information](#)

Xmas Appeal Set to Benefit CTs in Herefordshire

The **Herefordshire Times** has launched its Christmas appeal for 2020 in partnership

with the **Herefordshire Community Foundation**. Local councillors have nominated seven worthy causes, including two CT operations as follows: **Cllr Clive Thomas**, Mayor of Leominster, has nominated **Community Wheels**, described as "a vitally important community transport service, providing users of all ages and needs with door to door travel. It provides an essential lifeline for many people who have no other means of transport. During the pandemic, staff went the extra mile to help the most vulnerable members of Leominster's community, showing compassion and community spirit."

Cllr Trudy Stedman, Mayor of Hay-on-Wye has nominated **Hay & District Dial A Ride**, saying "this organisation and their amazing volunteers undertake nearly 7000 journeys a year transporting people to hospital or GP appointments, to the bank, shopping, library visits, prescription collections and much more including organised day trips to local attractions. During the coronavirus lockdown when they couldn't undertake their normal people transport duties, they switched their focus to picking up prescriptions and shopping and delivering food on behalf of a local food bank. They also stepped in to help out with transport for a resident who needed to attend regular radiotherapy treatments as they had a vehicle which enabled them to comply with the social distancing that was so important in this case. Dial-A-Ride is more than just a transport charity, they provide a lifeline and support mechanism for their 'customers', one they have adapted to support people through the pandemic... 'I don't know how we would function without Dial-a-Ride,' says **Trish Kiddle**, who helps organise a luncheon club for the elderly and a club for people with dementia. 'Our clubs are so important to our members and some would not get to these things without Dial-a-Ride. We are a community where lots of people live outside the town and Dial-a-Ride operating within a seven-mile radius means that they can be included – that they still get to join in. They just make people's lives so much better. There's a great group of people behind it all and lovely volunteers who drive for them. There are a lot of things we couldn't hold without them. We have 46 members who come to lunch club and most are unable to walk, and rely on Dial-a-Ride. It's a struggle for everybody at the moment, but

even before the current crisis, Dial-a-Ride has been a lifeline for a lot of people, and if it couldn't run, nothing would run. It just makes such a difference."



Retiring Sawbridgeworth Town Clerk Praised as Champion of Community Transport

Bishop Stortford Independent writes: "For **Richard Bowran, Sawbridgeworth Town Council** proved to be a perfect fit after he decided to change career path and get into 'clerking'. His background was in engineering and finance. Among the roles he had performed was finance director for the Port of Tilbury. But he craved a change. 'When the dot.com bubble burst 20-odd years ago it was time to try something else,' said Richard. A head-hunter contact pointed him towards town clerking. After a short stint at Letchworth Garden City, where he helped to establish the council, the town clerk role came up at Sawbridgeworth – and the traditional nature of the council appealed to Richard. 'Sawbridgeworth is interesting from a town clerk's point of view,' he said. 'It's large enough to make an impact but small enough to be flexible and do things.' Among the achievements he is most proud of is the setting up of the **Sawbobus Community Transport** scheme in November 2009. 'I've managed to acquire vehicles at no cost to the council. We provide about 20,000 passenger journeys a year and the service brings people into the town.' Richard's pride in launching Sawbobus was echoed by mayor **Cllr Annelise Furnace** at the October town council meeting when he announced his retirement. She told him: 'You've been a champion and a trailblazer for community transport.' Cllr Furnace also paid tribute to his skill at innovating. 'You've responded to the community's needs in ways that have not been tried before.'"

<https://www.bishopstortfordindependent.co.uk/news/council-trailblazer-who-got-town-back-on-track-bows-out-9144390/>



Nottingham CT Set to Benefit from Travel Agency Venture

CT4N, trading subsidiary of **Nottingham CT** has announced "the launch of a new subsidiary, **CT4N Travel**, a travel agency based in Sherwood, Nottingham...CT4N Travel has been set up as we look at other ways to help supplement our income...Having joined up with the **JTA Travel Group**, the company is fully ABTA and ATOL bonded and staff with over 25 years' experience, led by manager **Chris Wouldhave**, have been tasked with ensuring all customers' expectations from their holidays are met. Managing Director **Ian Combellack** said 'Although the Charity is at the heart of what we do, we're always looking for new opportunities to help develop and grow the CT4N brand further and to branch out into other areas. CT4N Travel will utilise the experience we already have in the team to help support the work of CT4N and the Charity.' The Company has already linked up with the **CTA** to provide travel services to all of the other affiliate organisations. **Bill Freeman**, Chief Executive of the CTA said 'CTA's members, such as CT4N, care about the lives of the people they serve way beyond them being users of their regular transport services. This great new initiative from CT4N provides the opportunity for CTA Members around the country to support their own service-users to have a holiday or a break by partnering with CT4N Travel. There is also the added benefit of additional income from being involved, which we know will be welcome news to many community transport operators.' Further information can be found on www.ct4ntravel.co.uk (which is also fully bookable), on Facebook (CT4N Travel), by emailing enquiries@ct4ntravel.co.uk or calling 0115 784 3388."



Darlington CT Provider FROG launches COVID-19 Test Centre
ITV News has reported on the **Grangetown Community Hub** COVID testing facility which is hosted by **Future Regeneration of Grangetown (FROG)**, a registered charitable incorporated organisation which also offers CT services.
<https://www.itv.com/news/tyne-tees/2020-12-14/parts-of-the-north-east-prepare-to-roll-out-covid-19-testing-programme>



DVSA Call for Higher Standards of Vehicle Cleanliness at Inspections
Driver & Vehicle Standards Agency has stated on its website: "Every day, our **Vehicle Standards Assessors (VSAs)** put thousands of vehicles and trailers through their annual test. They carry out this work to make sure vehicle operators can keep safe and moving during the pandemic...Across the transport industry, we've worked together to put procedures in place to protect drivers, staff and other colleagues. This includes a greater focus on making sure vehicles are regularly cleaned. We've always had a standard for vehicle cleanliness at test. It's a common sense approach which helps our VSAs to carry out their inspections without any restrictions...We do not expect your vehicle or trailer to have a full valet before its test.

But our staff do have to get into the cab as part of the inspection. So wiping down the interior of the vehicle beforehand is really important. The government has issued guidance about how to keep transport clean and prevent the transmission of coronavirus from touching contaminated surfaces. This should also be part of your procedures.
<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKDVSA/bulletins/2b10569>



Easilink Community Transport Delivered over 14,000 Food Parcels during Coronavirus Emergency
Easilink's efforts in Derry and Strabane have been highlighted by the **Derry Journal**: "The community transport network in Derry and Strabane has been a critical channel for delivering thousands of food parcels to less accessible parts of the district during the coronavirus emergency. **Patrick McEldowney**, chief executive of the Strabane-based **Easilink Community Transport**, said the company delivered 14,000 food parcels at the height of the pandemic. The true reach of community transport was highlighted during a **Stormont Infrastructure Committee** briefing. Mr. McEldowney said: "To give people a flavour of the range of services that Easilink provides, we were very heavily involved in the Department for Communities food parcel deliveries. Derry and Strabane and Fermanagh and Omagh councils approached us directly to see if we could look after it all. Other councils tried to mix some of their resources with community resources, so it is about whatever works in areas. We delivered all the food parcels into the rural areas of Derry and Strabane, so they were not just for Derry city and Strabane town. The DfC-funded neighbourhood renewal partnerships and groups were involved in the urban

areas, and we delivered all the parcels in the rural parts of the district. In Fermanagh and Omagh, we delivered all the parcels in Omagh, and **Fermanagh Community Transport** delivered them at the Fermanagh end.' Easilink is normally focused on rural 'Dial a Lift' services, disability transport and group hire for local charities, but got through a staggering amount of extra work during the COVID-19 crisis. 'Across the two councils, in my area alone we delivered over 14,000 food parcels during that 16- or 17-week period. On a number of occasions, both councils publicly not only thanked us for it but declared that they just could not have done it without an organisation like ours that had the network of not only resource in the drivers and vehicles that were suitable to transport these big, heavy boxes but of drivers who know the local areas and every wee lane and country road. That really helped us to do it efficiently,' Mr. McEldowney explained. During lockdown Easilink staff kept in touch with service users on a weekly basis. This became another vital service. 'As the weeks went on, those conversations became really important. We were ringing up not only to say, "Hello. Hope you're well. We're just checking up" but to try to suss out the situation by asking, "And are you getting a bit of food? Are you getting your groceries? How are you feeling?" It developed into being more than just a chat; it became about double-checking that they were not in trouble and did not have a particular need."

<https://www.derryjournal.com/health/easilink-community-transport-delivered-over-14000-food-parcels-during-coronavirus-emergency-says-ceo-patrick-mceldowney-3066511>



Newton Abbot CT Keeps the Wheels Turning

Planet Radio writes: "Volunteers at a South Devon-based community transport group say they will continue to operate during the second national lockdown to help

those 'almost living in a virtual lockdown all of the time'. **Nigel Canham** is chair of the **Newton Abbot Community Transport Association**, which operates across South Devon into places like Totnes and Dartmouth. He said: 'To give you some idea last year we completed about 21,000 passenger journeys across South Devon. That's 21,000 times that people were able to leave their homes and access the shops, access the doctors - so pretty important. We travelled more than 100,000 miles in total last year. That's four times around the world and we provided almost 3,000 shopmobility, scooter and wheelchair hires. I hate to think what the impact would be if we weren't able to continue with our services - because not only do we assist the individual who may be at home without the ability to get out but often they have families. Without us the families have to step in, so perhaps their lives might be impacted as well...We have to bear in mind that many people we help each year they're almost living in virtual lockdown all of the time - regardless of any pandemic.'" Trustees at **Newton Abbot Community Transport Association** made the decision to 'keep calm and carry on' at a special meeting held after Prime Minister **Boris Johnson** announced details of the latest restrictions. The board consulted with staff and volunteers before deciding that most of the group's services were just 'too important to be suspended'. Mr Canham added: "Having thought long and hard we decided it was possible to keep delivering the support we offer while ensuring that staff, volunteers and customers safe...The association provides a lifeline for hundreds of people at a cost they can afford. Even in normal circumstances, many of our customers effectively live their lives in lockdown, we are their link with the outside world."

<https://planetradio.co.uk/greatest-hits/devon/news/transport-group-vows-to-continue-saying-many-people-they-help-are-almost-living-in-a-permanent-virtual-lockdown/>



Buchan Dial-a-Community Bus Benefits from Donation

Aberdeenshire's **Buchan Dial-a-Community Bus** is one of three charities to benefit from the money raised at the 2019 **Ellon Ladies Ball**.

<https://www.grampianonline.co.uk/news/charities-benefit-from-ladies-ball-217830/>



Jack's Supermarket Donates £400 to FACT

Huntspost reports: "The supermarket chain **Jack's** has donated £400 to five organisations close to its Chatteris store. **FACT Community Transport**...are among the groups in Fenland to receive the cash. **Nicola Christy**, from FACT Community Transport, said the funding will go towards the charity's work in providing safe and affordable transport for Fenland residents. <https://www.huntspost.co.uk/news/jack-s-supports-donations-1-6955985>



CTA Online Events

CTA has posted that "On 18 November, we were lucky enough to be joined by **Tom Davy**, Joint Head of Bus and Concessionary Travel Policy at **Transport Scotland**, to give us an update on his department's ongoing efforts in the pandemic and to answer some of our members' questions and concerns. During the coronavirus pandemic, Tom and his team have been

focussing on supporting public transport but, Tom Told us, whilst Transport Scotland have tried to avoid public messaging that deterred people from public transport, inevitably passengers are worried. Concessionary fares for under 19s were due to be introduced in January 2021, he told us but this has been pushed back. The technicalities of the scheme and the rollout of smartcards is an enormous task, taking significant effort. Rollout of the Bus Partnership Fund has also been pushed back due to the pandemic, we learned, meaning that many of the projects like bus priority lanes and similar infrastructure are also delayed."

<https://ctauk.org/event-recap-country-forum-scotland/>

Other CTA online events that can be watched are:

- Good to Go – Organising Trips <https://ctauk.org/event-recap-organising-trips/>
- Meet the Minister – Wales (Deputy Minister for Economy and Transport, Lee Waters MS) <https://ctauk.org/event-recap-meet-the-minister-wales/>
- Big Questions, Big Ideas – Volunteering <https://ctauk.org/event-recap-volunteering/>

CTA Welcomes New Chair of Trustee Board

CTA has also announced that **Alan B Jones** has been appointed as new chair: "Alan joins us following a distinguished career in transport from which he brings significant leadership and governance experience. He is currently the Chair of the Board of Trustees for **The Institute of Logistics and Transport UK** as well as an International Vice President and Trustee for the **Chartered Institute of Logistics International**. 'Community transport is such an important sector and one that makes an enormous difference to the lives of so many people in so many different communities,' said Alan. 'I know how hard community transport providers work, often without the recognition they deserve, so

I'm passionate about ensuring community transport gets a much higher profile to deliver the best services it can. I'm looking forward to working with the Board of Trustees and the team at CTA to raise the profile of the organisation and to support its members in all their endeavours."

<https://ctauk.org/new-chair-of-trustees/>



Electric CT Buses for Surrey

The **Hants & Surrey Bus Blog** has posted the following: "This week saw **Surrey County Council** (SCC) announce the **Surrey Ultra Low & Zero Emission scheme**, which will see £49 million allocated to help fund up to 80 ultra low or zero emission buses for the main public network (£32.3m) and 50 minibuses for community transport operations (£6.3m). The 130 vehicles are expected to be in service by 2025, with an aim for all buses operating in the county to be either ultra low or zero emission by 2030. The remaining £10.4m will be split between bus priority highway improvements (£9m) and improvements to the real time information system (£1.4m). Operators will be able to apply for the funding to go towards the difference in price between conventional diesel vehicles and electric, hybrid or hydrogen powered alternatives."

<https://handsbusblog.wordpress.com/2020/11/26/surrey-to-invest-while-heathrow-withdraw/>



Ryedale CT & Xmas Spirit + Funding Boost

The **Scarborough News** has reported: "Create a Christmas decoration for

Ryedale Community Transport group and win tree-mendous acclaim..The Ryedale Community Transport group is holding a special festive competition to get people into the Christmas spirit. The group is asking people to create a Christmas decoration for its tree – and the eventual winner will receive a nice bottle of wine and a box of chocolates. A spokesman said: 'Simply post or drop your festive creation to us, complete with your contact details. We will be posting photos of the entries as we receive them on our Facebook page (search for Ryedale Community Transport) and via Twitter.'"

<https://www.thescarboroughnews.co.uk/news/people/create-christmas-decoration-ryedale-community-transport-group-and-win-tree-mendous-acclaim-3048860>

Meanwhile, the **Gazette & Herald** writes: "Several charities in Ryedale have benefitted from more than £479,727 allocated by the **Coronavirus Community Support Fund**. The **Encephalitis Society**, **Sight Support Ryedale** and **Ryedale Community Transport** all received funding from the £200m Coronavirus Community Support Fund, which is supporting the voluntary and charity sector during the Covid-19 pandemic... Ryedale Community Transport (RCT), based in Norton, provides affordable transport for people who are disadvantaged because of physical or mental disability and geographically isolated. 'We are absolutely delighted to receive this news, a generous donation of this size will make a huge difference in allowing us to carry on serving the community at the time we are most needed,' added Ken Gill, chief officer at RCT. 'This most welcome support will help ensure that Ryedale Community Transport comes through this crisis and can continue to improve, enhance and enrich the quality of life for so many residents.'"

<https://www.gazetteherald.co.uk/news/18883963.ryedale-charities-boosted-cash-injection-coronavirus-fund/>



Waitrose Supports Hoppa CT

In Your Area reports: "A community transport provider and charity has received a donation from **Waitrose Farnham** to help purchase personal protective equipment (PPE). Hoppa has been gifted a cash donation of £333 from the supermarket in Farnham, Surrey, to help go towards the charity's estimated PPE costs of £20,000 per year. The support for the charity from the supermarket comes with Hoppa being one of the three good causes to take part in the **Waitrose Community Matters** green token scheme during September. **Abigail McManus** from Farnham Waitrose said: "While Covid hygiene restrictions mean we are not using the tokens themselves for now, Waitrose Farnham still wants to help charities and not-for-profit groups - we know Farnham needs its community organisations now more than ever. It's always a pleasure to hand over a cheque to organisations like Hoppa." **Steve Forward**, general manager for Hoppa, said: 'Waitrose Farnham has very generously and thoughtfully continued to support Hoppa and other local charities despite the challenges of Covid. Having plenty of the right PPE is absolutely vital to running our buses - for our passengers, drivers and passenger assistants. Without it we could not transport elderly and vulnerable customers around local towns and villages. Our drivers could not help passengers on and off the vehicles or see them safely into their homes. Quite simply, donations like this keep us on the road and keep our customers safe, well and independent.'"

<https://www.inyourarea.co.uk/news/farnham-waitrose-gifts-cheque-to-local-community-transport-provider/>



Queen's Award for Gairloch Volunteers

Ross-Shire Journal reports that "volunteers have been honoured for their efforts running a community car scheme in

a Wester Ross village. **Gairloch Community Car Scheme** (GCCS) has been presented with the **Queen's Award for Voluntary Services**. The group helps to provide transport for residents in an area where public transport is limited and is often focused on longer-distance journeys to hubs such as Inverness, Dingwall and Ullapool. It is also of particular benefit to those who experience transport poverty or other barriers which can lead to severe isolation. The group were presented with the award by Lord Lieutenant **Joanie Whiteford** last week. On behalf of the council's **Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Committee**, chairman **Cllr Ian Cockburn** said: 'We are delighted that the hard work of everyone involved has been recognised by such a prestigious award. The work has been vital to ensuring that the community remains connected. They have also worked with our council transport staff to implement an innovative project which delivers school transport in the Poolewe area at a lower cost than a traditional contract model. The multi-purpose vehicle in use for this project is available for utilisation outside of school journey times to address a variety of local community transport needs and other areas of the Highlands are looking to set up a similar partnership approach. It shows just what can be achieved by a small but very active group of volunteers.' Lord Lieutenant Joanie Whiteford, who presented the award outside the car scheme's new premises in Poolewe, said: 'They are a fantastic group of volunteers. Throughout the coronavirus pandemic they have continued their lifeline service to this remote Wester Ross community, though passengers were largely replaced with shopping and prescriptions. This year is their 20th anniversary, and with another car added to their fleet, they are going from strength to strength.'"

<https://www.ross-shirejournal.co.uk/news/wester-ross-community-car-scheme-recognised-for-long-standing-work-219739/>



Bedale Community Minibus Adapts into Mobile Pharmacy

North Yorkshire County Council has highlighted how **Bedale Community Minibus** has responded to emerging needs: "From befriending services to delivering shopping and prescriptions, people in North Yorkshire have pulled together to accommodate the needs of their neighbours. Bedale Community Minibus is no exception. The community minibus service has picked up delivering prescriptions to those in the community who are shielding but need to get their medication. Under normal circumstances, Bedale Community Minibus team organises trips out for those in the Bedale area.

Malcolm Bloor, a member of the organisation said: 'Our small organisation is really unique - we are independent and provide community transport, for which we make a reasonable charge. Both of the buses are specially adapted to carry elderly and disabled persons. We were originally given a minibus for use in the Bedale area which was used to arrange day trips and take people out.' He said one of the local pharmacies in Bedale has provided a home delivery service for a number of years but became overwhelmed with requests during Covid-19. A local volunteer group helped at first, but Bedale Community Minibus was approached by North Yorkshire County Council to see if they could pick up the service. Malcolm added: 'We agreed to provide the service one day per week for 16 weeks. We go to the chemist, the driver shows their ID and they get a box of medication and then drive round delivering it to people in the community. We make sure someone at the house, either the person themselves or a carer, take the medication from us so it's delivered and we can report back any problems to the pharmacy.' Malcolm added they received a grant of £1,000 to start the community pharmacy and he raised £1,000 of their own funds to ensure that all expenses could be met. They started the deliveries in the middle of November and will continue with them for 16 weeks. **Gary Fielding**, Corporate Director for Strategic Resources, said: 'It's incredible to see how community organisations have changed and adapted to meet the needs of their communities. Help and support is always there if it's needed, in a range of different ways. I want to thank community organisations like Bedale

Community Minibus for their flexibility in serving their community.' **Marie-Ann Jackson**, Head of Stronger Communities, said: 'This is yet another example of just how resourceful and adaptable our local charities are in the county. North Yorkshire is incredibly diverse: different places have differing needs and also differing community assets. We know our local groups are best placed to understand what is needed in their communities and this is a great example of how a much loved community service is being put to best use during these unprecedented times to serve its local residents!' There is also a short **YouTube** video on the service.

<https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/news/article/bedale-community-minibus-adapts-mobile-pharmacy>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ehXaJv-Z3xc&feature=emb_logo



Food Pantries & Scottish CTs

The Glasgow Times reports: "A new charity set up by a Glasgow councillor has been launched to support and guide organisations who are thinking about setting up a pantry. **The Scottish Pantry Network**, developed by councillor **Mandy Morgan**, aims to divert food away from landfill and promoting a sustainable, dignified approach to food insecurity that will aid physical as well as mental health. So far there have been three pantries set up in Glasgow at Ruchazie, Parkhead and Castlemilk with a further three being developed at Old Dumbarton Road, Govan Road and Wester Common. The organisation hope to expand throughout Scotland with the help of local authorities and the **Scottish Government**. Councillor Morgan said: 'The network aims to bring about support for the pantries which are already set up. It will work with community transport to ensure as many people can access them as possible. We need as many people going to the pantries as possible to

make them sustainable. We want to roll this out across the country. We are working with organisations in Renfrewshire, Lanarkshire and Inverclyde. The network is there for the pantries, so we help them to support the community. We need to make things as sustainable as possible. We want to run projects around food education and provide tutorials and I am working with HSPC to do that.”

<https://www.glasgowtimes.co.uk/news/18875418.glasgow-councillor-sets-dignified-food-network/>



Special Commendation for Felixstowe Area Community Transport Service

East Anglian Daily Times reports that a: “Felixstowe-based charity has received a special commendation from the Queen’s representative in the county for its work during the Covid-19 pandemic. **Felixstowe Area Community Transport Service (FACTS)** was awarded a Certificate of Merit by **Lady Clare, Countess of Euston, the Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk**, as a thank you for ‘providing support for those in need during the present crisis. The Countess said: ‘Thank you all. You are an outstanding example of all that is best in this county.’ Manager **David Ablitt** said: ‘This is a tremendous honour for us, and a big thank you to all our volunteer drivers and helpers when we are proving vital community support.’ FACTS helps anyone of any age with a physical, cognitive or sensory impairment which limits or restricts use of public transport within the Felixstowe area. Mr Ablitt said: ‘We operate a door-to-door service, whether it’s transport to the shops, hairdressers, social clubs, day care centres or even an afternoon at the bingo. During lockdown we were still here, delivering prescriptions and food parcels and still operating for medical appointments. The

service was set up by a volunteer committee in 1990, with a single borrowed ambulance. It has grown to have a fleet of specially adapted minibuses suitable to carry people whatever their level of mobility. Founder member **Denis Versey** said: ‘We made our first run in February 1990 with that borrowed ambulance. Then with fundraising and grants we were able to buy our first Mercedes van and get it specially converted for ambulance use a year later. ‘It is marvellous to see how it has grown and thrived. Even though I am 88 now, I have not had to use the service myself. It is vital for a lot of people.’”

<https://www.eadt.co.uk/news/felixstowe-area-community-transport-service-royal-award-6746284>



Llanwrtyd Wells CT Nominated for Award

Wales 247 reports that “Two local companies from Powys are in the running to be named one of the best rural businesses in the UK after being shortlisted in the 2020/21 final of the **Amazon-backed Rural Business Awards**. **PM Training and Assessing Ltd** from Brecon has been shortlisted in the Best Rural Innovation category and **Llanwrtyd Wells Community Transport Ltd** from Builth Wells has been shortlisted in the Best Rural Social Enterprise, Charity or Community Project category in the 2020/21 Rural Business Awards...Llanwrtyd Wells Community Transport Ltd is a not-for-profit Social Enterprise. The company provides community transport services, linking with the existing bus and rail route wherever possible, endeavouring to increase social inclusion and improve quality of life in the rural area. Speaking after being shortlisted for an award, **Laura Burns** from Llanwrtyd Wells Community Transport Ltd said: ‘We’re over the moon at the news that we’ve been shortlisted for a Rural Business

Award. Receiving recognition like this from Amazon and the Rural Business Awards is a welcomed boost during a difficult year. Last year we were the National Runners-up in our category, having been the Winner for the Wales and Northern Ireland Region, and we're hoping we have shown the judges even more about what we do this year."

<https://www.wales247.co.uk/powys-businesses-shortlisted-for-national-award/>



Green Dragons & Coronavirus in South Wales

The **Western Telegraph** has run this article: "The importance of **Preseli Rural Transport Association** – better known locally as **Green Dragon Bus** – has been highlighted during the coronavirus pandemic. It provides community transport services in south Ceredigion and North Pembrokeshire from its Bwlchgroes base to help those unable to use mainstream transport due to their disability or age or having no access to normal public transport. Manager **Caroline Wilson** told December's meeting of Cardigan Town Council that it had been a huge struggle to keep the service running and helping more vulnerable members of the community during the Covid-19 pandemic. 'We are still operating as and when we can,' she said of the service, which covers places as far afield as Beulah, Aberporth, Llechyrd and St Dogmaels. 'We can only operate at half capacity and people do not want to come into town. Our Friday service used to see us do 30 pick-ups in a day. We are now down to two and it is really sad. It is also difficult with the town centre being closed as people struggle to access the shops and many of our passengers cannot walk very far. Things had just started to get going again and people were slowly getting more confident about going out but then last Monday morning it all stopped. People are scared but we will continue to do what we can for our passengers and getting folk back to being more independent again.' Caroline also highlighted the Green Dragon Bus 'Wheels to Work' scheme where people over the age of 16 and in need of transport to get or keep a job and live or work in the Pembrokeshire, North and West

Carmarthenshire or South Ceredigion areas, can loan a scooter. Scooter loan is from just £40 per week plus a £250 refundable deposit. The group will provide safety gear including a helmet, jacket, trousers, boots and gloves as well as a fully insured Honda Vision scooter (with top box and bike lock) for your personal, exclusive use for between six and 12 months.

<https://www.westerntelegraph.co.uk/news/18918304-coronavirus-affected-bus-service-eredigion-pembrokeshire-carmarthenshire/>



TAS wishes all our friends and colleagues a happy Christmas and hopefully a healthier New Year



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