



Community Transport Newsletter No.7 April 2021

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

National Bus Strategy for England Unveiled

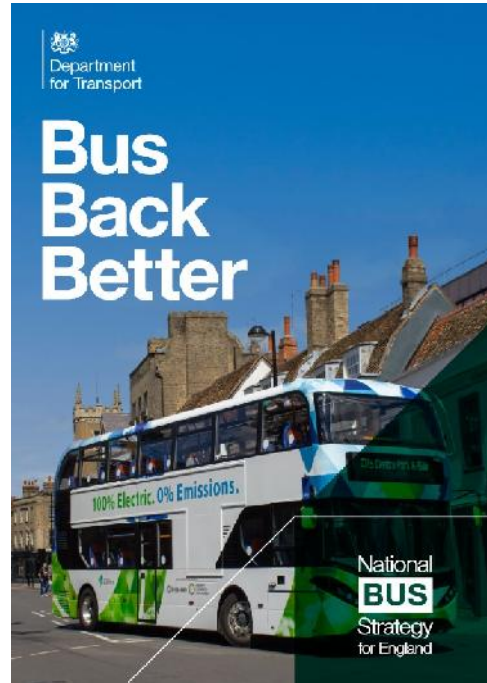
DfT has published Bus Back Better, the Bus Strategy for England. The Strategy has, however, just four minor references to community transport:

- J) "Prior to COVID-19, the sector received funding from central Government through concessionary fares funding, the Bus Service Operators Grant, community transport grants and support to subsidise socially necessary services."
- J) Plans must be developed in collaboration with local bus operators, community transport bodies and local businesses, services and people.
- J) Bus Service Improvement Plans will:
 - o Be developed by LTAs in collaboration with local bus operators, community transport bodies and local businesses, services and people.
- J) Almost £260 million per year is paid in BSOG to operators of eligible bus services and community transport organisations."

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/969205/DfT-Bus-Back-Better-national-bus-strategy-for-England.pdf

There is further comment from TAS Partnership on the Bus Strategy on our website here:

<https://taspartnership.co.uk/tas-partnership-welcomes-national-bus-strategy/>



CT Services in Guernsey

Guernsey Press: "The Health Connections charity is continuing to connect the community to offer support during lockdown. Its online directory has more than 450 community organisations offering support and activities to enable people in the Bailiwick to live happier, healthier and more fulfilling lives now in this pandemic and beyond. Before lockdown, its community connectors were busy in the local talking café project and its voluntary community transport service was delivering up to 800 journeys per month, taking isolated people to get support. While the talking cafés and shop are closed, other services continue. The directory now has an up-to-date and trusted category for community support during coronavirus. The charity has also partnered with bus.gg to ensure a safe transport service continues, taking people to essential appointments. 'We realise that the non-digital population, particularly the elderly and isolated, cannot all access devices to use our directory of community support,' said CEO Bella

Farrell. 'To address this we have taken on the Stay Connected project from the We All Matters, Eh! organisers to ensure that the elderly, isolated and vulnerable have access to tablets and iPads, Wi-Fi devices and support and skills to use them.' That gives them the opportunity to connect to family, friends and groups during the pandemic. However, Ms Farrell says this project will continue beyond lockdown as this need is ongoing and it will address a barrier to a stronger, more connected community. 'Whether it be regular video calls, check-in messages, booking appointments or the Health Connections community transport service to take them to these appointments or simply keeping minds sharp with entertainment, news, brain training and mindfulness, no one in our community should feel isolated due to lack of technology or access to vital online resources such as the Health Connections directory,' she said. The charity has also relaunched its Help Your Neighbour flyers and these can be downloaded from its website. It is hoped that this initiative will ensure no one feels isolated from support at this time. While the fundraising shop remains closed, the charity's shop team is busy with community mask making and the Invisible Occupation – the islands' lockdown journal projects. To join the free directory of community support or volunteer to assist one of the projects or services, call 707470 or email hello@healthconnections.gg. A donation can be made via www.healthconnections.gg or by cheque made payable to Health Connections LBG and sent to Health Connections, c/o Ron. Short Centre, Beau Sejour, Amherst, St Peter Port, GY1 2DH."

<https://guernseypress.com/news/2021/02/19/charity-details-its-support-for-community/>



Celebrating Women in Transport
 CTA Wales Director Rachel Burr writes:
 "Last year CTA were proud to be a part of an event celebrating International

Women's Day and marking the incredible impact of women working across the transport sector. The event, at the Senedd in Cardiff, celebrated the contribution of women across the Welsh transport sector, bringing together colleagues from all parts of the industry for what was an inspiring afternoon. We shared the contribution of community transport in improving gender equality within transport provision and looked at how we can encourage more women to join and succeed in the industry. Whilst this year we can't gather together in the same way, the message of the event remains as important and timely as ever. Below, you can find what Christine Boston, my predecessor as CTA's Director for Wales, talked about at the event, and how increased representation of women in the wider transport sector is key to truly inclusive and accessible services: 'Community transport is a sector that proudly focuses on the provision of accessible and inclusive transport, filling the gaps in the wider market. By stark contrast to the rest of the transport sector, community transport has a very high representation of women across all roles. Chief Executives, Transport Managers, mechanics and drivers are much more likely to be female, and 60% of leaders in the sector are female. It's perhaps no coincidence that the part of the transport sector focused on the provision of inclusive transport is predominantly led by women. It certainly bears out the evidence that suggests having women lead on transport design creates services that provide for a broader range of needs. Our members provide everything from local minibus services to car clubs, all of which are based on the very real needs of the communities they serve...'"

<https://ctauk.org/celebrating-women-in-transport/>



Rural Mobility Funding
 DfT has approved the Rural Mobility Fund (RMF) bids with a total budget of £19,411,523. Many of these pilot projects

are DRT-based, and some will involve CT operators in delivery. The allocations are as follows:

-) Buckinghamshire Council (Aylesbury) £1,114,000
-) Buckinghamshire Council (High Wycombe) £736,000
-) Cheshire East Council £1,260,000
-) Cheshire West and Chester Council £1,075,000
-) Cumbria County Council £1,500,000
-) Essex County Council (Central Essex) £1,493,000
-) Essex County Council (South Braintree) £1,082,000
-) Gloucestershire County Council £1,352,000
-) Hertfordshire County Council (North East) £1,472,000
-) Leicestershire County Council £1,300,000
-) Norfolk County Council £700,000
-) North Lincolnshire Council £912,232
-) Nottinghamshire County Council £1,497,000
-) Staffordshire County Council £1,038,091
-) Surrey County Council £660,200
-) Warwickshire County Council £1,020,000
-) Wiltshire Council £1,200,000

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rural-mobility-fund/rural-mobility-fund-successful-bids>



Anna Whitty MBE, Steps Down after over 30 years at Ealing Community Transport

Anna Whitty MBE, one of the UK's leading and longest serving CT managers, has announced her retirement from her role as Chief Executive. Anna says: "After 32 amazing years with Ealing Community Transport and 13 years as Chief Executive, the time has come for me to step down and retire at the end of April, especially now that the permit issues have been resolved.

There is something so very special about what ECT and other CTs across the UK do, about the people and communities we support, and about the CT teams who make it all happen. There is always so much more to do, particularly in the midst of such unprecedented times. But I have come to a point in my life, I believe that the time is now right for me to step away and spend more time with my grandchildren. In October, I informed the Board of my intention to retire and I am delighted to tell you that, after a rigorous recruitment process by our trustees, a new chief executive, John Chesters, has been appointed to take the reins. John will take up his position with ECT on 24th May. From our conversations, it is clear that John understands the important work that we do for our communities." Anna's grandchildren, pictured with her below, will thankfully not be taking up all of her time, and Anna will continue to be an active presence in the CT sector.



Powys CT in Award Nomination

Powys County Times: "Two Powys businesses are preparing to battle it out against companies from across the UK ahead of the Amazon backed Rural Business Awards final, which will take place on Thursday, February 25. Llanwrtyd Wells Community Transport will be hoping for joy in the 'Best Rural Social Enterprise, Charity or Community Project' category and PM Training and Assessing will represent Brecon in the 'Best Rural Innovation' category in this year's final. Due to the impact of Covid-19, the 2021 finalists will attend an online ceremony where the overall winners in each category will be announced. This year, businesses had 13 categories they could

enter, ranging from 'Best Rural Start-Up Business' and 'Best Rural Diversification Project', through to 'Best Rural Professional Services Business'. Llanwrtyd Wells Community Transport is a not-for-profit social enterprise. The company provides community transport services, linking with existing bus and rail routes wherever possible, endeavouring to increase social inclusion and improve quality of life in the rural area. Speaking ahead of the final, Laura Burns from Llanwrtyd Wells Community Transport, said: 'We're over the moon to be in the running for a Rural Business Award. Receiving recognition like this from Amazon and the Rural Business Awards is a welcome boost during a difficult time. 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.' 'The Rural Business Awards is an excellent opportunity to highlight the accomplishments of rural businesses and we're very proud to be sponsoring the awards, particularly during this challenging year,' said John Boumphrey, UK country manager at Amazon. 'I would like to wish PM Training and Assessing and Llanwrtyd Wells Community Transport the best of luck ahead of the final.' The Rural Business Awards 2020/21 will mark the awards' sixth year of celebrating the success of businesses across the UK's rural sector, which contributes £299 billion in gross value added to the overall UK economy. The Rural Business Awards is the brainchild of Leicestershire businesswomen Anna Price and Jemma Clifford, who wanted to showcase the wealth of entrepreneurial talent in rural areas of Britain.

To find out more, visit

www.ruralbusinessawards.co.uk."

<https://www.countytimes.co.uk/news/19110566.powys-companies-final-rural-business-awards/>



Ilkley Youth and Community Association Supports Families in Need over Half Term

Ilkley Gazette: "Ilkley Youth and Community Association is delighted to have successfully worked with local schools to deliver over 100 meal kits to families and carers of children who attend Ilkley, Addingham and Burley schools over February half term. Having been awarded a substantial grant from the government's Covid Winter Grant Scheme by Bradford Council, the registered charity worked with Ilkley Grammar School and local primaries to help identify families who would benefit from receiving food support during half term. With trustees and volunteers for the charity helping to organise the event, the charity was given incredible support by a huge number of groups and individuals in packing, transporting and delivering food, including Ilkley Rugby Club, Ilkley Community Transport, Great Get Together volunteers, Robbie Moore MP, and district councillor Kyle Green (one of the trustees of the charity). In addition to this, the charity was able to work extensively with local businesses who wanted to support the project. Tesco in Ilkley provided a huge amount of logistical support, whilst Moin Moin Bäckerei, Lishman's, Host, Waste Not and many more provided either food or significant support for the project. Ilkley Youth and Community Association Trustee Kyle Green said: 'This was a wonderful project that has had fantastic feedback from families and saw so many amazing volunteers, community groups and businesses come together to showcase the very best of Ilkley. I want to particularly thank the amazing staff at IGS for helping us to reach all the families who needed support, Sarita at Tesco who provided incredible amounts of assistance, Ilkley Rugby Club, and all the businesses who stepped up to help support this project. In delivering this project we hope to have made a huge difference to those in receipt of our food boxes. We know this is a hugely difficult time for so many during the current pandemic and we hope this will have made life that bit easier for those who are struggling.'"

<https://www.ilkleygazette.co.uk/news/19112244.ilkley-youth-community-association-support-families-need-half-term/>



TRIP in Drive for Funds to Buy Electric Vehicle

Midweek Herald: "An East Devon charity dedicated to beating rural isolation through affordable transport, specialised disability equipment and a befriending service, has launched a final push to raise the funds it needs to buy an all-electric vehicle. Honiton-based TRIP needs the new wheelchair-friendly vehicle to replace one that was donated 17 years ago by town carers' champion Win Cameron. The much-loved Renault Kangoo has provided loyal service, making around 5,000 trips every year. It is part of TRIP's six-vehicle fleet which together makes around 40,000 trips a year. TRIP deputy manager Sharon Thorne said: 'TRIP has spent many years caring for our local communities, helping to reduce loneliness and isolation with services such as transport and befriending. We recognise that for our community to be healthy, our environment also needs to be healthy. That is why TRIP is investing in a new 100 per cent electric vehicle. This new wheelchair accessible vehicle will replace one of our older vehicles, providing not only a better experience for our passengers but also zero emissions....The vehicle that Win Cameron so generously donated was much loved and hugely valued by everyone at TRIP, especially by our service users.' The new vehicle will cost £35,000. The charity raised £17,500 before lockdown brought an end to its fundraising plans – so now it has launched a crowdfunding campaign to generate the further £20,000 it needs. Around £1,500 has already been pledged online. Sharon added: 'If we can reach the target we will be the first community transport group in the South West to go electric. We want to make ourselves future-proof. We have been going for nearly 25 years. We want to be here for the next 25 years too.' TRIP has maintained many of its services despite the pandemic, including a car to get people to urgent medical

appointments. The ring-and-ride service has continued to get people to the shops for essential goods and TRIP's befriending service has continued over the phone. The charity, which has around 60 volunteers, has co-ordinated more than 2,000 shopping requests for the housebound and organised more than 200 trips to vaccination centres in Honiton, Exeter, Exmouth and Taunton. To support the appeal, you can visit: <https://www.avivacommunityfund.co.uk/electric-dreams.>" <https://www.midweekherald.co.uk/news/trip-charity-funding-appeal-7565752>



The 'Hidden Hero' at Nottingham Community Transport

Nottingham Community Transport is celebrating success at the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT) 2020 Awards for Excellence, which was held on 17 March. Elaine Allitt, who works for Nottingham Community Transport as Easylink Co-ordinator has been awarded the prestigious Sir Robert Lawrence Award, which was founded to recognise those who have made an outstanding and sustained contribution to the profession of logistics and transport. This year CILT wanted to recognise and celebrate the contribution of a 'Hidden Hero' who has excelled in their contribution to society during an unprecedented year. Managing Director Ian Combellack said: 'Over the past 12 months, Elaine has gone above and beyond in her role to help people in need. From what started as telephone welfare checks on all our Easylink customers has now transpired into something a lot bigger.' Whether it is a bunch of flowers for a customer who is feeling low, a birthday card to celebrate a milestone, reassuring customers that our services are safe to use, or providing a shoulder for people to cry on, Elaine has been there all the time. 'In addition to offering a listening ear, Elaine has organised medical supplies, arranged for drivers to collect prescriptions and

undertaken essential shopping for some of our most vulnerable customers. She also organised the collection of items from her colleagues and friends, so that she could provide a number of food hampers for people who were suffering unavoidable hardship' said Ian. When the Covid vaccinations programme started, it was Elaine again who was at the forefront of ensuring our most vulnerable customers had transport to take them for their vaccinations. Nottingham Community Transport chair Andrew Grieve said: 'Everything that Elaine has done has been on her own initiative because it is in her nature to help as many people as possible and I am so proud of her. She is the real deal when it comes to empathy and understanding of need in the community. Elaine has stepped up at a time unprecedented in modern history where people have been so socially isolated and in need of support in so many different ways. The bright star of our Community Transport is Elaine Allitt, but the real winners are our users and members in the Nottingham Community and we're really proud of what Elaine has been doing.' Ian added 'the past few months have also been difficult time for Elaine and the rest of the family as her "baby brother" has been in hospital suffering with Coronavirus. Despite having her own personal problems to contend with, she has always put other people first before herself and she really is our Hidden Hero and we are delighted that she has won this award.' Speaking after the award, Elaine thanked everyone in the Company for all of the support that she has received and is over the moon to have won such recognition both for herself, the organisation and the people that we help. She added that we are now ready for the challenges that lay ahead as we start coming out of the pandemic.



People to Places uses Baylis Funding to Keep Buses COVID-safe

Maidenhead Advertiser: "Cash from the Louis Baylis Trust (LBT) has enabled a community transport charity to become more hygienic as it emerges into a post-virus world. People to Places operates minibuses across the Royal Borough which help to transport people into town for shopping and essentials. It also runs a Shopmobility service in both Maidenhead and Windsor which allows people to hire a wheelchair or scooter to help them navigate the high streets. The service has seen demand drop during the height of the pandemic but has kept going over the last year, assisting people with hospital appointments and prescription pick-ups. The charity has also been running shopping errands and vaccination trips for members. CEO of People to Places, Peter Haley, said that a strict cleanliness regime has been kept up to ensure minibuses are clean and members can ride on them safely. A £1,000 boost from the trust has gone towards installing screens between drivers and passengers, PPE, and an air filter system within the vehicle which helps dispel virus particles. The charity now hopes to make these features commonplace on minibuses as it looks to a more hygienic future. 'There is clearly going to be COVID around in the background for a long time, so it was a short-term emergency, but it will bring long term benefits,' Peter said. 'As we get vehicles in the future, we will just buy them with the filters and the screens and ensure we carry on that good practice. Whatever we have done now for COVID, will hopefully protect people from those other illnesses.' Peter added that the virus has affected the charity on a personal level, with members lost to the disease. 'It is desperately sad,' he said. 'But this is one of those things that we are going to come out of with a much better sense of how to look after people.' The charity is now hoping its members using the minibus and Shopmobility service will continue to grow after a 'slight uplift' recently, as more people get vaccinated. 'People have got to make their own decisions about when they want to come out and we will be there supporting them when they do,' he added."

<https://www.maidenhead-advertiser.co.uk/gallery/maidenhead/166477/people->

[to-places-uses-baylis-funding-to-keep-buses-covid-safe.html](#)



**Team North Yorkshire:
Volunteers Branches Out with
'Buddy' Teams to Help the
Isolated Cope in Lockdown**
Darlington & Stockton Times: "A community transport service offering a lifeline to remote communities in the Yorkshire Dales could have found itself redundant when coronavirus lockdowns left residents with nowhere to go – so the service was re-invented to provide a comprehensive package of assistance for the isolated and vulnerable. Reeth and District Community Transport (RDCT) has been providing a service to those lacking transport in the villages and hamlets of the Dales which are no longer served by conventional bus services but when the first lockdown hit, it was recognised that while people were left at home their needs remained as great – or greater – than before. As a result, the service began to reshape itself with volunteers like Jill Burdis, who acted as driver for the eight-seater minibus, taking on alternative tasks – carrying out shopping runs and working in the office to co-ordinate calls for help and their response. Her initial offer had been to step in for 'two or three weeks', but her tally is now approaching 50 and she has no expectation of stepping back anytime soon, because demand remains so great. Part of that demand may be down to the wide-ranging and effective services RDCT now offers, on top of about 40 shopping runs and 120 prescription deliveries each week. A range of 'buddy' teams have been established, with 'house buddies' on standby to help with simple necessities like changing light bulbs and smoke alarm batteries, 'back yard buddies' for the outdoor jobs like shovelling coal or de-icing paths and more

recently 'paper buddies', operating a pen-pal style service for isolated residents who may have limited hearing and found conventional telephone calls from befrienders difficult. The organisation has adapted as the pandemic unfolded through the course of 2020, with Jill's optimistic offer of two or three weeks' extra volunteering an indicator of how little people understood of the real impact the emergency would have. The situation saw her withdraw from another role as a first responder because the ambulance service wanted its professionals not to respond to calls involving breathing difficulties, meaning her shifts on standby could see her with few calls. A new job for the minibus has been transporting residents for coronavirus vaccinations and other medical appointments – with the vehicle able to safely carry two passengers at a time under current restrictions – but demand for the additional services being offered has yet to subside. Jill said: 'It is just a case of adapting as needs arise and setting up systems in the office to take calls, co-ordinating volunteers and getting the requests from our community dealt with as efficiently as we can. We have such good volunteers, now there are over 50 of them clocking up about 170 hours per week, this is keeping things going and they step up to offer assistance as and when we need them and never turn down a request. I think it is nice to be needed. What I have really liked is that as time has gone by, we have got to know people so well they have become friends and you care for them as you would your own family. 'At Christmas I was really aware some people were home alone and whilst walking the dogs, we called on them for a distanced "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" at their doors. It was quite emotive and greatly appreciated. People are independent and don't want to be a burden, but I think they are now more willing to ring and ask if they need something. One of the things which humbles us is the cards and messages we get from people. All you need to know is that you have made a difference and making a real difference is something we do every day.' The service has been highly praised by Joan Graveson, 88, who was widowed last year and was approached with the offer of help. 'They asked what I needed for shopping and everything else, it was a very positive approach,' she said.

'They have expanded their services magnificently.' Between lockdowns she attended meals organised through the group and said: 'A stroke of genius was them asking me to make soup. They had the imagination to know that the way of pulling me in was to give me something to do. They are exceptional. They have been an important part in my recovery because they have shown I can make a contribution.'

<https://www.darlingtonandstocktontimes.co.uk/news/19109178-team-north-yorkshire-volunteers-branch-buddy-teams-help-isolated-cope-lockdown/> plus

YouTube video here:

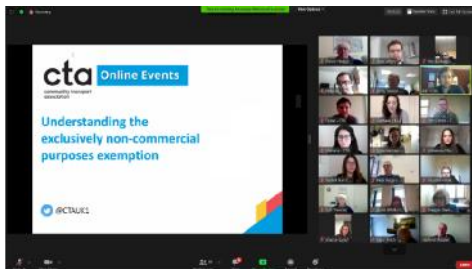
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zHgKBCJTbBc>



Understanding the Exclusively Non-Commercial Purposes Exemption

CTA online event recap: "On 25 February we held an event looking at the Department for Transport's updated guidance on the exclusively non-commercial purposes exemption, one of three possible exemptions from holding a PSV Operators' licence that community transport providers can use when applying for a Section 19 or 22 Permit."

<https://ctauk.org/recap-ncp-exemption-event/>



How Coronavirus has Highlighted the Need for Better Rural Transport

Jenny Milne, PhD Researcher in Rural Mobility as a Service, University of

Aberdeen, writes in The Conversation: "We are now approaching a full year of living with COVID-19 and the restrictive conditions of lockdown. Its impact on travel networks, particularly public transport, has prompted plenty of discussion, but much of the emphasis has been on cities, with less attention given to the countryside – the island and rural areas where travel was already a challenge. People's travel needs have evolved in response to COVID-19, with the rise in home working, concerns around conventional public transport and interest in relocating from cities to rural and island areas. So despite the challenges, there is not only an opportunity but a demand for a new way to travel in rural areas which better considers the needs of local communities. My research looks at something called "mobility as a service", which combines all manner of transport to help people get from A to B. Traditionally, pilot projects focus on city areas using an app, but technology is not always the answer and the needs and characteristics of rural communities differ from urban areas. My work focuses on local communities so we can identify barriers to mobility and design transport options that improve access to health, education and employment...Pandemic challenges - Beyond the private car, country dwellers have always lacked choice when it comes to getting around for daily life. Options are often limited to sporadic bus services (already facing serious cuts before the pandemic, community transport or catching a lift with a friend or neighbour. But crucially, these forms of transport have also offered the extra value of social interaction for the most vulnerable or isolated in rural communities..."

<https://theconversation.com/how-coronavirus-has-highlighted-the-need-for-better-rural-transport-155533>



Scottish Veterans Charity Erskine launches Minibus Appeal

Erskine website: "Covid-19 has been especially cruel to our Veterans. Like many, they have missed out on so much. Before the pandemic, our Veterans enjoyed days out across the country. Specialist minibuses make these trips possible. That's why it's so important that our older minibuses are now replaced with new reliable transport....

Veterans will be travelling in their own pods on the minibus to allow for social distancing. The pods mean only half of the seats can be used to give enough space between passengers. More transport is desperately needed so Veterans don't miss out.... The pandemic has brought huge additional costs, like PPE to keep our Veterans as safe as possible. We still need to raise £55,000 so Veterans have access to a new specialist minibus. Can you help?"
<https://www.erskine.org.uk/minibusappeal/>



Lateral Flow Testing & CT

Department of Health & Social Care says: "The Community Testing Programme (CTP) was launched in December 2020 to enable local authorities with high prevalence of COVID-19 to work in partnership with the UK government to accelerate a reduction in prevalence by identifying asymptomatic cases through local testing and supporting them to isolate...the programme will be extended to all local authorities across England, not just those that had previously been prioritised based on the Tier system. It is important that every authority now joins the programme. It will deliver a step-change in identifying cases and reducing prevalence in our communities...it is most important that local authorities make testing available to those people who are permitted to leave home for work (including essential voluntary work) and who are unable to access asymptomatic testing through other routes, particularly those who are critical to

supporting communities, responding to the pandemic and/or at higher risk of infection and transmission."

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-testing-explainer/community-testing-a-guide-for-local-delivery>

The initial focus on care home visiting and schools has in many areas extended to drivers and assistants involved in education transport – many local authorities are routinely including bus drivers in the programme. Front line social care workers are also included in the testing regime.

<https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests>

Wales guidance includes transport workers
<https://gov.wales/asymptomatic-testing-education-and-childcare-settings-html>

CTA, meanwhile, has been encouraging its members to adopt workplace testing:

"CTA's Chief Executive, Bill Freeman, has been in discussions with the Department for Transport about access to mass testing capability for CTA members. The Minister confirmed in writing to him last month that CTA's members in England should be encouraged to participate in the Workplace Testing for Transport Workers scheme, which has now gone live. This was initially intended to be for workforces of 250+, but the criteria for joining the workplace testing programme has been reduced to organisations with more than 50 employees and this can include volunteers. This means the scheme is now available to a far greater number of community transport organisations than had initially been envisaged. If you are a charity or voluntary organisation, registered in England with Companies House, with 50 or more staff (paid or volunteers or a combination of both) who cannot work from home, you can sign up to receive the free rapid lateral flow test kits by registering here <https://www.gov.uk/get-workplace-coronavirus-tests>.

If you are a charity or voluntary organisation that is not registered at Companies House you will be unable to register online, but you can still sign up. You will need to email p-and-psector@dhsc.gov.uk with the email subject 'National Workplace Testing – Charity', and a team at DHSC will complete the validation process. You will need to include the following information: your organisation's name; your Charity registration number; how many eligible employees (including volunteers) you have; an email address; and the industry or

sector of your organisation. We appreciate this won't work for every CTA member, but would encourage those that are eligible to benefit from the scheme. If your combined workforce (staff and volunteers) is fewer than 50 people, your employees should find out if they can get a lateral flow test from a test site instead. If you click here you can enter your postcode which will direct you to your local information. We're keen to see what the take-up is amongst CTA members, so please let us know via advice@ctauk.org how you get on and if you have any difficulties in getting registered." We understand that some of the London CTs do not wish to adopt workplace testing due the complicated process involved in enrolment and facilitation of the scheme, while readily accessible testing facilities are available nearby.



Tenbury Transport Trust Welcomes New Team Member
 Press release: "A charity which provides a transport lifeline for people in parts of Worcestershire, Shropshire and Herefordshire has strengthened its team with the appointment of an experienced office administrator. Kay Hawes, has taken up her new administrative role at Tenbury Transport Trust, a charity which has been providing a safe, reliable and professional transport service for people who don't have adequate transport of their own for more than 21 years. Kay and her husband moved to the area about five years ago from Hampshire and says Tenbury Transport Trust is her perfect job. Her role includes looking after the transport needs of the clients and the day-to-day running of the office. 'My husband and I love the area. I was born and raised in Kent and we wanted to retire up here because we enjoyed visiting over many years, but we decided to move while we could still find work, enjoy ourselves and make a new circle of friends,' said Kay. 'It's a lovely part

of the world, so beautiful everywhere you look. I know they say Kent is The Garden of England but I disagree now. When I saw the advert I knew it was the job I was looking for and it's close to home which means I can be in the office quickly if I'm needed - it's just the perfect role for me. My working life has always involved supporting and caring for others. I previously worked in Special Education Needs where I was PA to a principal in Hampshire, have been a senior administrative assistant to a global IT director for one of the largest pharmaceutical companies and spent 16 years with the Metropolitan Police and Hampshire Constabulary. My various roles have taken me to places such as Italy, France and America.' Mrs Hawes said she was amazed at the work the charity was providing - especially during the pandemic. 'The Trust is providing a very important lifeline to the community and is just so valuable to people - not just in meeting transport needs but also as a point of contact - whether that be with me answering the phone or face to face with our drivers. I enjoy helping and talking to people, something I have always done in my previous jobs, and I learnt over my years with the police how to engage with people from every walk of life in every situation imaginable...My background and experience will assist me greatly with my work at Tenbury Transport Trust and I look forward to chatting to our clients whenever I can. I think this is a vital part of what we do as the service we provide may be the only time of the week when a client gets to see or speak to anyone. We cover a substantial rural area, not just Tenbury Wells, and people can feel isolated. Just knowing that they have a trip to look forward to with us can often be a highlight of the week for them. I always try to get the message across that if they feel unwell, stuck indoors, want shopping doing, or have any critical needs like medication, we will go and fetch it for them and take it to the house. It's important for them to know that they are not alone.' Wendy White, chair of the charity said: 'Kay is an excellent addition to the Tenbury Transport Trust office. In such a short time she has already become a well-known friendly voice of the Trust and we are so pleased to have her work for us.' For more information about Tenbury Transport Trust, visit

<http://www.tttrust.org.uk/>, or call 01584 819452."



Specific US Effort in Omaha to Provide Transport to Black Communities to Improve Vaccination Rates

3 News Now: "Many in the Black community have expressed hesitancy to receive the COVID-19 vaccination. Health officials say that while their doubt is justified, they want Black people to know the vaccine is safe. 'There's a history of distrust of the government for good reasons. There's the Tuskegee experiment, that's something that we have to face right upfront. That was a horrible national disgrace and the community remembers that. We have to know that it's different this time around and this is safe, it works,' Douglas County Health Department Resource Specialist, Phil Rooney said. Reverend Selwyn Bachus of the Salem Baptist Church in North Omaha said the Black community should trust this vaccine because Black people have been a part of the science behind it. 'African Americans, Black and brown folks...they've been a part of the process and I believe this is safe because we've been a part of that planning and the science and all of that,' Reverend Bachus said. Bachus is leading by example as he received his second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine on Friday. 'We've been adversely affected by COVID-19 and I want the community to know it's safe and we need to make sure we take care of ourselves. As African Americans, Black and brown people, we've been stricken with it at a higher rate even though our population is lower and so I just wanted to get out and be a leader in doing this,' Reverend Bachus said. While some may be hesitant in getting the vaccine because of a lack of trust, others find that the vaccine isn't accessible. A study done in Omaha found that Black people were getting tested for the

coronavirus at a lower rate than other populations. 'Some of the participants mentioned that the COVID-19 test registration process was very complicated. If you recall initially, when the testing first began, you had to present symptoms in order to get the test and that was kind of confusing,' Director of the Nebraska Center for Healthy Families, Doris Lassiter said. She said the issues with testing are being reflected in vaccinations. 'I'm looking at the same issues that dealt with getting the COVID test that could prohibit people from getting the vaccines. If you don't have access to the COVID test and you don't have transportation to get a COVID test, you would perhaps have that same problem when you're trying to get your COVID vaccine,' Lassiter said. Reverend Bachus said he's working on coordinating transportation to vaccine sites. The Douglas County Health Department is also working to take the vaccine to people rather than waiting for them to come to vaccine sites. Next week, the Nebraska Methodist College of Nursing and Allied Health will be taking their van into the north Omaha community to provide transport to those in need."

<https://www.3newsnow.com/news/local-news/leaders-urge-the-black-community-to-get-the-covid-vaccine>



Amid Second Wave of Deaths: London Bus Drivers must form Rank-and-file Safety Committees at all Garages!

World Socialist Web Site: "Fifty-nine London bus workers have died from COVID-19 in less than a year—17 since December alone—according to new figures released by Transport for London (TfL). This catastrophic death toll, and the trauma and loss for loved ones left behind, is the outcome of corporate neglect and the ruthless "herd immunity" policy of Boris Johnson's Conservative government that places profit before lives. Amid a cover-up

of garage infections, the suppression of any effective track-and-trace system, or priority access to vaccinations, bus workers are falling victim to a second wave of preventable illness and death. Fatalities in just 12 weeks include four bus workers in December, 10 in January and three so far in February, according to TfL. Reports from garages indicate the number of deaths this month could be far higher. On average, more than one bus driver has died each week during the pandemic. Of the 59 bus workers who have died, 47 are bus drivers and 2 are Dial-a-Ride drivers..."

<https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2021/02/24/busdf24.html>



New COVID Cleansing Aid Available

Jon Critoph from Community Action Ledbury says: "I always continue to research the market for new developments and in doing so came across a new battery powered device for fogging the buses. The great thing about this apart from its size and weight is that the coating applied is effective for 3 months so great news we do not need to do this daily. Will be ordering my first one shortly as it is a lot cheaper than the Zapptizer and I have negotiated a 20% reduction in price for CTA members..."

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



Transport Contract Given to Brighton Councillor's Company

The Argos: "The city council has defended a decision to give a senior councillor's company a school transport contract without putting it out to tender. Brighton and Hove City Council gave Community Transport a £160 per day contract to take children from St Margaret's Primary School to Longhill High School. This was while St Margaret's temporarily closed for site works. General manager of Community Transport, Tom Druitt, is a senior councillor on the ruling Green administration. His link with the company, and his managing director position on The Big Lemon CIC Bus Company is reported in his register of interests. A council spokesman said it was 'extremely rare' for transport contracts not to be tendered but it does happen in 'temporary emergency situations'. The spokesman said: 'We had to make emergency arrangements at very short notice for children. This has been very successful. No children have lost any time at school, and St Margaret's has told us how much they appreciate what we have done. The council has to be able to respond quickly to exceptional circumstances and emergencies – particularly when it is clearly in the best interests of vulnerable children and young people and our key worker parents. We are ensuring social distancing on transport to keep children and staff as safe as possible. Community Transport, which runs the Big Lemon, is the only organisation on our list of approved transport providers that was able to offer a vehicle big enough for the job. Our legal team is very clear that we have acted in accordance with the council's rules on contracts and within the law. It is extremely rare for transport not to be tendered and only happens in temporary emergency situations. The circumstances that arose here are unlikely to be repeated. It is well known that the manager of Community Transport is a senior councillor. This is reported on his register of interests. But our decision to use his company was based purely on the fact that Community Transport was the only transport provider who had a big enough vehicle.' Conservative opposition councillor Mary Mears raised concerns about the importance of transparency considering the sensitive topic of school transport contracts in the city. In 2019, dozens of children with

special needs were left stranded after the school transport service descended into chaos amid a plan to 'streamline' the service. Multiple taxi companies pulled out of contracts organised by Edge Public Solutions, a firm which was awarded a £499,000 contract to cut costs. The fallout eventually led to a £1 million overspend on a £3 million-a-year budget. Conservative councillor Mary Mears said: 'Following on from this debacle and the issues that were raised, and considering another report is set to come out, it's really important that everything is done openly and transparently. This is so the council wouldn't have to defend itself in the paper, because it would be put out to tender and published to make the process clear.' The council negotiated a discounted price of £160 per day initially for the three weeks up to half-term. Due to delays in site works this was extended until March 3. Speaking on behalf of Big Lemon, Cllr Druitt said: 'We have worked with the council since 2012 as a contractor and we have been asked to do various things to help out where we can. In this situation, we were asked to help out at the last minute to solve an urgent need to get the kids back to school, so we did. I had a call in the afternoon and we took the kids to school the following morning. I've been driving it every morning and it's been really nice, the council responded to an urgent need from the school and we've responded to help.' The Big Lemon boss added that all the children and staff have been 'a delight'."

<https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/19142089.untender-ed-transport-contract-given-brighton-councillor/>



Cumnock Transport: Bus Route Trial to Support Jobseekers
 Cumnock Chronicle: "A new bus service is to run connecting people in some of the more rural parts of East Ayrshire to

Cumnock from where they can travel onwards for work. The buses will run from Muirkirk and New Cumnock, beginning from March 8. They will depart at 6.30am to get people to Cumnock bus station in time for connecting services to further afield areas. It's a pilot scheme being trialled by Coalfields Community Transport in collaboration with the Department for Work and Pensions and is designed to connect people looking for work with potential interviews and work placements. Exact locations of departure are not known yet but will be confirmed to jobseekers by their work coach. Jobseekers are given a first month free allowance to travel by the Job Centre and Coalfields Community Transport say they will work to increase capacity on the route and thus keep prices low after that one month period. Susan Dever, project coordinator at CCT, said: 'The idea is to give the local community access to work opportunities and training that they currently don't have only because they live in a rural area.' Susan was also keen to remind any groups who might benefit from a bus service to get in touch to see if something can be done about establishing one. She said: 'I'd say the same to the community groups, get into contact with us. There's loads of places in East Ayrshire that aren't very well connected. We can help, it's just that not enough community groups know about us.' The Coalfield Community Transport initiative, a registered charity, aims to provide affordable and accessible transport to community and voluntary groups to enable them to participate more freely in social, recreational and community activities."

<https://www.cumnockchronicle.com/news/19131609.news-pilot-bus-service-connect-rural-areas-cumnock/>



Launch Event of Revitalising Rural: Realising the Vision
 Rural Services Network: "The Rural Services Networks was delighted to launch its campaign Revitalising Rural:

Realising the Vision. The campaign calls on Government to fairly fund rural areas and to ensure that Government policies are developed and implemented in ways which take into account the particular needs of rural communities. Taking place on Monday 1st March, the Launch Event of Revitalising Rural: Realising the Vision was chaired by Philip Dunne MP, (Chair of the Rural Services APPG) and focussed on three key issues highlighted in the campaign that are vital to rural areas: Rural Transport, Affordable Rural Housing and the Rural Economy. The Rural Transport session was chaired by Rob Butler MP and featured: John Birtwistle, First Group, Cllr Keith Little, Cabinet Member responsible for Transport, Cumbria Council, Bill Freeman, Community Transport Association."

<https://rsnonline.org.uk/launch-of-revitalising-rural-realising-the-vision>

The documents on rural transport are here: <https://rsnonline.org.uk/images/revitalising-rural/rural-transport.pdf>



RURAL TRANSPORT AND ACCESS TO SERVICES

New 'BOD' on the Scene - Bromsgrove On Demand Community Shuttle Bus Set to Launch

Bromsgrove Standard: "The new BOD (Bromsgrove On Demand) bus will launch next month – operating between the railway station, town centre and surrounding areas. The pilot scheme is aimed at reducing congestion and providing improved public transport options for local residents. The service, which will be delivered in partnership with Via, will be available to book through a mobile app and will operate from Monday to Saturday, between 7am and 7pm. The Standard broke the news of the new community shuttle bus last month with the district council ring-fencing £250,000 in this year's budget for electric vehicles, an app and touch-screens at stations so people can summon it. App users can suggest their pick-up and drop-off locations when

booking and the system will then direct people to a 'virtual bus stop', enabling quick and efficient shared trips without any detours. Via's technology is already being used across more than 200 cities and transport authorities around the world, including Transport for Wales, Milton Keynes Council, Stagecoach, Go-Coach and Arriva. Councillor Adam Kent, Bromsgrove District Council's Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration, said: 'The pandemic has shown us the need for innovative ideas and this will be the first of its kind in Worcestershire. I'm absolutely delighted to see the launch of BOD happening. This scheme is ideal for bridging the gap between the railway station, the town centre and residential areas – that all-important first and last mile of the journey which is often the reason why people don't use public transport.' Bromsgrove District Council leader Coun Karen May, said: 'Not only is this brilliant news for Bromsgrove but it enhances the sustainability of our town centre, linking it with rail and our local residents and villages. Coun Kent and I are keen supporters of this service and we have worked closely together with county colleagues to make this service a reality.' Coun Alan Amos, Worcestershire County Council's Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways, said: 'The County Council has worked closely with local district council colleagues and I'm really pleased that we're nearing a position to launch this new flexible on demand transport service in Bromsgrove. We're continually monitoring current public transport usage and looking at new ways to help people travel around the county and this includes making use of the latest technology. We're already making a number of improvements in Bromsgrove to reduce congestion and provide better transport options and this on demand service will help to enhance this even more.' More information about the app, the cost, exact coverage and who will operate the service will be made available nearer the launch in April."

<https://bromsgrovestandard.co.uk/news/new-bod-on-the-scene-bromsgrove-on-demand-community-shuttle-bus-set-to-launch/>



Tunbridge Wells Cabs for Jobs Pays Trips for Elderly People to get Coronavirus jabs

In Your Area: "New organisation Cabs for Jobs Tunbridge Wells has teamed up with two community transport charities to drive elderly and vulnerable people free to and from their coronavirus vaccinations. Cabs for Jobs Tunbridge Wells is a local branch of the nationwide movement to raise money for such journeys. The branch wants to raise £3,000 to help older people in the area and is already nearly halfway to that target on its Go Fund Me page. It said many of the those being vaccinated are elderly without their own transport and with limited income. It has formed partnerships with the Community Car Service and Dial 2 Drive in Tunbridge Wells whose volunteer drivers take elderly residents to medical appointments. Both charities have reported a rise in demand due to the vaccination programme. Both services have to charge for fuel costs for their volunteer drivers but Cabs for Jobs Tunbridge Wells will cover these costs for trips to and from local vaccination centres. It said it hopes to expand the service as more funds become available. Lorraine Ash, regional manager of the Community Car Service, said: 'We have been providing a transport service for local people who are either disabled, elderly or vulnerable for many years. Our users will really appreciate the very kind gesture of travelling free to their local vaccination centre, especially at this time of year when they need more money to heat their homes.' Victoria White, a founder of the Cabs for Jobs Tunbridge Wells, Kent and fundraiser, said: 'We are really pleased to team up with these two local transport services that already do so much to help our local community. I would urge people to do all they can to help, either by

supporting the two charities direct or by donating to the Cabs for Jobs Tunbridge Wells fundraising page. The more money we raise the more people we can help and the more trips we can pay for. That way, no one will have to break the bank to get to their vaccination appointment.' Cabs for Jobs in Tunbridge Wells was started by Victoria White, borough councillor Matt Bailey and resident Lance Goodship. If you know someone who needs transport call for more information on Community Car Service 01892 540 131." <https://www.inyourarea.co.uk/news/tunbridge-wells-cabs-for-jobs-pays-trips-for-elderly-people-to-get-coronavirus-jabs/>



Exceed Minibus Turns out to be a 'van' – a Cautionary Tale of which CT Operators should be Aware

Bus & Coach Buyer: "A Derbyshire minibus operator has been left high and dry by the liquidation of Exceed Autocraft last month, with a minibus which won't reach the legal speed limit. Tony Bott, whose business A & A Minibus is based in South Normanton, bought a VW Crafter-based conversion from Exceed Autocraft in November 2019, and has since discovered it is registered as a van, with the speed limiter set at 56mph. 'I was told at the time that I purchased this that the speed was only 56mph as it was basically a van and after the conversion it would get a memory code from Germany so that the speed would be put up to 62mph in line with UK legislation,' Tony told Bus and Coach Buyer. 'This was tried five times. I went to VW at Sheffield four times and even VW in Hull but they could not get the speed as promised. In the end they said that it couldn't be done and basically I had to put up with it. I said this was not acceptable as I purchased this vehicle on the

understanding that the speed would be lifted to the legal speed limit. As we know, the legal speed for coaches is 62mph for safety reasons. This is stuck at 59mph so I can't pass large lorries and, on long runs, I lose a lot of driving time.' The discovery that the Crafter had been registered as a van came a year later at its first MoT: 'This was a shock. I was hit with the fact that this bus wasn't even a registered PSV vehicle. I had five V5s and each one was wrong as they kept coming back as a van. Now I know why. Now it does say minibuses, even has 17 seats, but it's not a PSV. There was no COIF, and when we contacted Exceed's Matthew Flett about this, he argued that the paperwork was all in order because the IVA was on it. DVLA say this is not correct for this vehicle, and it was down to Exceed to have put all of this in place before it was sold.' Tony said that the original salesman was Peter Vernon: 'I contacted a solicitor who sent all of the paperwork to Matthew Flett, who responded by saying that Peter Vernon was nothing to do with Exceed Autocraft, and had no authority to promise that the correct speed would be set. The fact that his name is on all of the paperwork blows that out of the water.' But as soon as Tony instigated legal proceedings, he had another shock in store: 'My Solicitor issued them with a court letter on the 19th February 2021 and they have now gone into liquidation, on the 23 February.' Tony pointed out that Matthew Flett was also a director of Excel Conversions, which went into liquidation in 1998, and of Excel Minibus Sales, which went into liquidation a year later. Both were based in Doncaster. 'Covid has put my business on hold big time... but now Exceed has just about finished me off,' said Tony. In April 2019, Route One revealed that operators of some minibuses, registered as vans before conversion, were being charged £100 for London's ULEZ instead of £12.50. The vehicle which highlighted this issue was built by Excel Conversions. Minibus Options' Director and expert in registration of conversions, Steve Moore, told Bus & Coach Buyer that the implementation of the four EC Vehicle Approval systems began in Autumn 2011, so it is likely that the majority, if not all, pre-2011 vehicles may be caught up in the ULEZ problem, because the vehicle classification is based on the V5. 'Indeed, a number of converters still convert base

vehicles already registered as vans, and get a Certificate of Initial Fitness. These vehicles will also be recorded as N2, not the M2 passenger vehicle class which Minibus Options and others achieve with Individual, or Whole Vehicle, Type Approval systems. The attraction in buying minibuses converted and COIF'd is price; there are cost savings in taking this route. Another attraction is that, for example, an extra-long wheelbase vehicle can be converted to take more wheelchairs with COIF than would be passed under IVA."

https://www.busandcoachbuyer.com/exceed-minibus-turns-out-to-be-a-van/?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Bus%20%20Coach%20Buyer%20Newsletter%20-%20Wednesday%2017th%20March%202021&utm_content=Bus%20%20Coach%20Buyer%20Newsletter%20-%20Wednesday%2017th%20March%202021+CID_f8a87c4dcaa43b063b999660a0d390fc&utm_source=&utm_term=READ%20MORE



Electric first for Annandale CT
DnG24: "A wheelchair accessible electric vehicle has joined the fleet of a community transport group. And Annandale Community Transport Service (ACTS) has named the new set of wheels 'Fergie' in recognition of the recently retired chairman Willie Fergie and his contribution over many years. ACTS secured a share of funding made available through the Scottish Government's Community Climate Asset Fund (CCAF) – a grant of £30,885.94 – and additional funding was provided by Muirhall Energy Ltd through the Crossdykes Initial Investment Fund. ACTS manager Janet Saunders explained the new vehicle will help the residents of Annandale and Eskdale to reduce local carbon emissions through travelling in a more environmentally friendly way. And she said: 'We are delighted to have received funding for our first electric vehicle in the fleet. The car will be used for accessible, affordable transport to hospital appointments both locally and at hospitals out of the region in Glasgow, Edinburgh etc.' Residents in Annandale and

Eskdale requiring door to door transport, or anyone interested in helping the local community by becoming a volunteer driver should contact the office on 01576 203053 or email admin@actsbus.org.uk. In addition, ACTS would like to hear from those with any of the following skills to join the board of directors – knowledge of vehicles, running office premises, business finance, training, and HR. Janet added: 'The main attributes needed are enthusiasm and the desire to work as part of a team to help the community.'

<https://www.dng24.co.uk/electric-first-for-transport-group/> also
<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/local-news/annandale-community-transport-services-buys-23644417>



More Good Causes Benefit in Drive to Reduce Food Poverty
Midweek Herald: "Thirty worthy projects have so far been funded by East Devon District Council's Coronavirus Community Food Fund, giving out a total of over £45,000. This fund provides grants for any projects related to providing food to residents of East Devon who are in food poverty during the Coronavirus situation [including] £1,200 to the Honiton Community Transport Association to pay for them to go and collect food from Bristol that would otherwise be wasted. This food will then be distributed to people in need. Councillor Marianne Rixson, East Devon District Council's portfolio holder with responsibility for Coronavirus response and recovery said: "I applaud the work of all the voluntary groups which have stepped up to the mark, as they undoubtedly have been an absolute lifeline for our local communities. However, it is a sad indictment on our society that so many people need to turn to food banks just to get by."

<https://www.midweekherald.co.uk/news/east-devon-food-poverty-7807906>



Welcome to the new Ryedale Rover service

Kirkbymoorside Town Blog: "Ryedale Community Transport are delighted to announce that they have received funding from The National Lottery Community Fund to develop a Dial & Ride service for Ryedale. The name of this new service is The Ryedale Rover. The service is being designed to address the needs of the many individuals and communities who struggle to access mainstream transport due to a variety of issues, particularly aimed at people with special transport needs due to disability or poor mobility and residents for whom there is no public transport or affordable alternative to make their journey. Ken Gill, Chief Officer at Ryedale Community Transport, said 'We know, having been doing this for many years, that difficulties in getting out and about in rural areas, not only restricts people ability to access ordinary services such as medical or hospital appointments or just a routine shopping trip or visiting friends. But also, the lack of transport options directly impacts on the quality of life of many residents; limiting their independence, increasing feelings of isolation and loneliness, there are sadly many examples of this following nearly of year of isolation for a great many residents in Ryedale.' The service will provide flexible transport for minimal cost. Users will need to pre book journeys at least 24hours in advance; they can do so by calling 01653 698888.

The Ryedale Rover will be an evolving service which can expand and develop as demand grows for its use. It is hoped that when fully implemented it will provide regular transport routes in Ryedale at an affordable price. The Dial & Ride will also serve popular destinations such as major supermarkets. The vehicles will collect you from your doorstep and drop you back at home. Further details can be found on the website www.ryedalect.org.

<https://www.kirkbymoorside.info/welcome-the-new-ryedale-rover-service/>



Covid-19: Montgomeryshire's Fight One Year on

My Welshpool: "Less than a month ago the Powys seven-day case rate was 120 per 100,000. Today, that has reduced to 40 per 100,000. The recovery has been turbo charged by the incredible vaccination programme put in place by Powys Teaching Health Board. As of last night, 53,300 people had received their first dose, and a further 10,300 people had received both doses. An incredible operation that will be ramped up in the coming weeks, according to local health chiefs. 'With thousands of vaccinations taking place each week, we will need to use all our capacity to offer people an appointment as quickly as possible,' said spokesperson. 'This may mean that your offer of an appointment is not at your nearest mass vaccination centre. We ask that if you can take up the offer of an appointment, then please do as this will be your quickest opportunity for an appointment. But we do also recognise that travel may be an issue for you, and our booking hub can help with travel advice and support – including from the amazing network of community transport teams'."

<https://www.mywelshpool.co.uk/viewernews/ArticleId/20156>



Ring and Ride Lifeline Appeals for Funding Help

Mid-Week Herald: "The team behind a vital community transport lifeline have issued an urgent appeal for help this week. The plea for funding comes from the Axe Valley and West Dorset Ring and Ride service, a not-for-profit organisation that helps keep people connected in Axminster, Seaton, Lyme Regis, Bridport, Beaminster and the surrounding parishes. The service, which has been running for nearly 20 years, operates two disability-accessible minibuses. In the last year, the impact of the coronavirus pandemic has seen the service's income from fares slump dramatically. Organisers are also concerned that social distancing measures mean that its vehicles will not be able to operate at normal capacity for some time yet, which will further reduce income. The service also needs to replace one of its minibuses which is coming to the end of its working life. Sandra Ward, chairman of the organisation, said: 'Ours is the only ring and ride service for Axminster, Seaton, Lyme Regis and associated areas. We are a much needed service and often have waiting lists to use the buses. Can I take this opportunity and make an urgent plea for funds for our company, that has strived so hard during the last year to continue to operate. We also need a new vehicle, to keep our well used services running to the wide area we cover.' Jane Hopson-Hill, co-ordinator with the charity, explained the importance of Axe Valley and West Dorset Ring and Ride. She told the Herald: 'The service supports those who wish to remain independent in their own homes, particularly the disabled, elderly and socially and rurally isolated, by giving them the opportunity to do their own shopping and to visit other parts of their local community. The bus driver collects passengers from their homes and carries bags of heavy shopping on and off the bus when necessary. He also operates the tail lift facility on the bus for passengers in wheelchairs and mobility scooters and those who have difficulty using stairs. For many passengers, using the service has greatly enhanced their quality of life. The service is of great benefit to isolated or disabled people who through lack of suitable transport can be cut off from services and shops available locally. Due to the lockdown we have lost most of our

income from fares and the necessary social distancing measures mean that we are unlikely to regain the previous level of income, perhaps for years. We are also fundraising for a new minibus to replace our old vehicle and give more comfort to the passengers.' The service has been in operation since September 2001 and is a registered charity running community transport for the East Devon and West Dorset areas. The door-to-door service offers passengers security and comfort, taking a lot of the strain out of shopping. Morning shopping trips to places like Axminster, Bridport, Honiton, Sidmouth and Chard cost just £5 return. There is also a passenger club for each zone that offers a weekly afternoon trip and a day trip on one Saturday each month and is very popular with members. The subscription fee is just £10 and gives the opportunity to visit destinations such as Otter Nurseries, Sherborne, Portland, the Somerset Levels and Abbotsbury Swannery, with day trips to Lynton and Lynmouth, Glastonbury, Wells, Swanage and many others. The service covers an area from Beer to Bridport and Beaminster to Membury, encompassing many tiny rural areas in between – and offers a lifeline to many who may find other forms of transport inappropriate or simply lacking. For further information and details about any of the trips available you can contact the service on 07510 255 965." <https://www.midweekherald.co.uk/news/axe-valley-ring-and-ride-7805736>



CT Funding Approved for West Yorkshire

Insider Media: "Housing and transport projects have secured backing from the West Yorkshire Combined Authority. The authority's Investment Committee has agreed to progress schemes which together will help bring forward more than 900 new homes, reduce carbon emissions and improve road safety...The committee has also approved £785,000 for the Door-to-Door Community Transport Service,

with a pilot due to start in May 2021 in South Leeds. Cllr Denise Jeffrey, chair of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority Investment Committee and leader of Wakefield Council, said: "Schemes like these are central to our drive to making sure people are better connected to work, education and leisure opportunities, as well reducing the region's carbon emissions and boosting the delivery of urgently needed housing. Through these projects, the West Yorkshire Combined Authority is continuing to demonstrate its commitment to not only building a stronger and growing economy that works for all, but also to improving the day-to-day lives of our communities." <https://www.insidermedia.com/news/yorkshire/housing-and-transport-projects-backed-by-combined-authority>



Basildon Council to Continue with £76,000 Yearly Grant to Basildon Community Transport Service

Essex Magazine: "Basildon Council has agreed to continue providing a yearly £76,000 grant to the Basildon Community Transport service, for the next three years. The decision to award the grant funding to the local charity based in the George Hurd Centre, was unanimously agreed by councillors at a Housing and Communities Committee meeting in February 2021. The council had previously granted two three-year Grant Funding Agreements (GFA's) for the period 1 April 2018 – 31 March 2021 – one being for the provision of Community Transport (£50,000) and the other for General Services (£26,000). Chairman of the Committee, Councillor Kerry Smith said: 'Basildon Community Transport Service (BCTS) has been providing support to the older and disabled community across the Basildon borough for over 20 years. They provide our older, less mobile residents, who are unable to use public transport, with the ability to travel without restriction. This contributes to clients continuing to live independently in their own home, providing clients with a greater sense of wellbeing and quality of life. During the pandemic

they've had to adapt; providing befriending calls to their members to ensure they are safe and to reduce social isolation and loneliness. The services they provide to older and vulnerable residents in the borough are crucial. I'm thrilled that we have agreed to continue granting the charity £76,000 for the next three years, to ensure the service can continue for older and vulnerable residents of the borough. And I'm sure the service users themselves will be thrilled too."

<https://www.essexmagazine.co.uk/2021/03/basildon-council-to-continue-with-76000-yearly-grant-to-basildon-community-transport-service/>



Dial-a-Ride is part of £100k plan to transform Harrow

My London: "Harrow could benefit from new cycle routes, 20mph limits and bus service support if it's given £100,000 from a citywide transport improvement scheme. Harrow Council hopes to secure the grants from TfL but this has yet to be confirmed, the local traffic and road safety advisory panel (TARSAP) heard. If the full amount is allocated...£10,000 would be spent on a dial-a-ride service in Harrow town centre's Havelock Road. Cllr Peymana Assad (Lab, Roxeth) told a TARSAP meeting on Tuesday (March 2) that these suggestions, allocated by the borough's Labour Group, represented a "balanced" use of the proposed funding. She said: "This will help people get out on their bikes more but also looks at bus routes...and a new dial-a-ride will support our disabled constituents."

<https://www.mylondon.news/news/west-london-news/new-cycle-routes-london-bus-19965166>



Shrewsbury Woman's Death Partly due to being Tipped from Wheelchair going down Kerb

Shropshire Star: "A Shrewsbury woman being taken to a community minibus was accidentally tipped out of her wheelchair going down a kerb, hitting her head, an inquest has been told. Julie Davies, 64, from Wingfield Close, Ditherington, was taken to hospital but her condition deteriorated and she died three months later. Yesterday the inquest at the Shirehall, was told that volunteer minibus driver, who had been handling the wheelchair, had 24 years' experience. He had undergone a refresher course in wheelchair handling and that changes had since been made to Shrewsbury Dial-a-Ride's systems, making the wearing of lapstraps in wheelchairs compulsory. The accident happened in September last year. Speaking after the inquest Mrs Davies' daughter, Tarnia paid tribute to her mother, who had had serious medical problems. She said she was glad that lessons had been learned. 'Mum was a very positive lady, despite her problems and never complained. She was well known in the area,' she said. The senior coroner for Shropshire and Telford, Mr John Ellery, said that Mrs Davies had died from natural causes, contributed to by the tipping from the wheelchair. He heard that Mrs Davies, who had diabetes and was a triple amputee, used the Shrewsbury Dial-a-Ride service. On September 17 last year, volunteer driver, Mr Christopher Fryer, arrived to transport Mrs Davies. In his statement Mr Fryer said he deeply regretted the incident and had been devastated to learn about Mrs Davies' death."

<https://www.shropshirestar.com/news/health/2021/03/11/womans-death-partly-due-to-being-tipped-from-wheelchair-going-down-kerb/>



Shropshire 'Sidelined' as County Misses out on Rural Transport Funding

Shropshire Star: "A community bus operator has said Shropshire's old and disabled residents have been 'sidelined' after the county missed out on a share of £20 million designed to shake-up rural transport. The Government's Rural Mobility Fund was set up to support innovative on-demand services, such as minibuses that can be booked via an app and are able to get closer to where people live in rural and suburban areas, at a time convenient for them. Staffordshire, Cheshire East and Warwickshire were among the 17 areas to benefit and will receive just over £1m each, but Shropshire will not be receiving funding. John Harrison, of North Salop Wheelers Community Bus Project, is part of a campaign network which has been transporting residents from villages to appointments through the pandemic lockdown. 'We have kept this service going for the last 12 months without a break. It is old people running this and we deserve better. We have been operating a Covid express service and going into areas to pick up people where no-one else will go. It is safe to say that we will be making inquiries about this. Shropshire's old, sick and disabled people have been sidelined yet again.' The fund was unveiled as the Government launches its new National Bus Strategy, backed by £3 billion of investment. Funding will enable authorities to trial innovative projects in rural and suburban areas, where traditional timetabled services are often not practical. It aims to help residents who do not drive, especially older people, to access medical appointments, work and education – combatting isolation and loneliness. Transport Minister Baroness Vere said: 'Buses are the life-blood of our communities. They get us to work, to school and to see friends and family. Put simply, they help us make the little everyday journeys that make up our lives. In places where people are more dispersed, and the distance they need to travel is longer, it can be harder for traditional, timetabled bus services to truly meet their needs. The funding we are announcing today will give local authorities the opportunity to trial services that work better for communities – such as

wheelchair-accessible minibuses that can be booked on an app on request. The schemes will help people who've had limited transport links for too long get to where they need to be."

<https://www.shropshirestar.com/news/transport/2021/03/17/disappointment-as-county-loses-out-in-rural-transport-bid/>



CTA Announces return of CT Awards

Bill Freeman says: "We're excited to announce that this year will see the return of the Community Transport Awards – a fantastic opportunity to come together as a sector and celebrate the amazing work of CTA members who have done so much for so many people over the last year. The awards will be taking place online this November and will be free to attend for all CTA members. Nominations are open to any organisation providing accessible and inclusive community transport and who fit the criteria for each award. The last time we held the Community Transport Awards was back in 2019 where we were joined in Manchester by over 200 people to highlight the incredible work of the community transport sector. Whilst the roadmap for easing coronavirus restrictions across the UK suggests that, by November, conferences and gatherings may be allowed, we've taken the decision to hold this year's awards online to make sure that everyone can take part. The last year has been a difficult one for everyone in the community transport sector, but time and again we've seen our members doing incredible work to support the people in their communities who need them the most. We're excited to come together as a sector in November to recognise and celebrate their dedication. We'll be opening bookings, and announcing more information in due course, including our categories,

nomination process and our judges. For now, make sure you mark Thursday 11 November in your diary to join us online at the 2021 Community Transport Awards.”

<https://ctauk.org/save-the-date-2021-ct-awards/>



TAS Director John Taylor Writes...



To conclude this newsletter, TAS Director John Taylor has contributed a suggested approach as to how CTs can strengthen their position when taking advantage of the non-commercial exemption for s19 / s22 permit operations. 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.

EU Regulation 1071/2009 for permit users in GB – suggestion for CT operators who wish to take advantage of the non-commercial purposes exemption

As all community transport operators will be aware, the DfT’s long-awaited guidance on s19 and s22 permit use was published in December 2020.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/section-19-and-22-permits-not-for-profit-passenger-transport/section-19-and-22-permits-not-for-profit-passenger-transport#guidance-on-eu-regulation-10712009-for-permit-users-in-gb> This guidance is primarily a walk-through of the points made in the court judgment in the 2019 Judicial review case. The key aspect for most operators is how they can take advantage of the exemption from PSV O licensing by demonstrating that they are engaged in delivering services exclusively for non-commercial purposes.

The guidance states that “Existing permit holders must satisfy themselves that they fall within the non-commercial exemption and must be able to provide sufficient evidence to the permit issuer if required. The permit holder must consider whether or not each and every one of its services fits within their non-commercial purposes. Those seeking to obtain a permit must satisfy themselves that they will fall within the non-commercial exemption before applying for a permit.” This clarifies that each operator wishing to use s19 or s22 permits should undertake a review of its services and be confident that its ‘non-commercial purposes’ position is robust. DfT has made clear that an operator’s charitable status in itself does not provide sufficient grounds for the exemption to be claimed. Areas that the DfT considers are important are:

- J Operator surpluses - if any surplus is made, permit holders must retain evidence about when and how that surplus has or will be reinvested into their organisation.
- J Competitive procurement or tendering for contracts - the overall extent of competitively tendered contracts which a permit holder operates can be indicative of its purposes and therefore should be taken

into account...the amount of competitive tendering is not in itself sufficient to prevent an operator being able to fall within the non-commercial purposes exemption. All the factual circumstances need to be taken into account on a case-by-case basis.

- J Operator size and scale - size and scale of the operator is not in itself sufficient to prevent an operator falling within the scope of the exemption provided they can demonstrate that all their purposes are non-commercial. In doing so, all the factual circumstances need to be taken into account.
- J Cross subsidy - where an operator provides road passenger transport services simply for the purpose of generating surpluses to fund other transport or non-transport activities, the operator does not fall within the exclusively non-commercial exemption. However, the judgment does not completely preclude cross-subsidies where they arise incidentally.

You will note that the DfT is simply passing on the court judgment that whether or not 'non-commercial purposes' applies is to be settled on a case-by-case basis. Hence this is far from a simple black and white issue.

However, from a practical point of view, it is clear that these four factors are the ones that are likely to be considered by a curious DVSA investigation officer or by the Traffic Commissioner if an operator gets called to a hearing. Consequently, we recommend that those CT operators who are affected by this guidance should, as required, go through a proper process of satisfying themselves that they fall within the non-commercial purposes exemption and gathering the evidence together that underpins this determination so that they can provide it to the permit issuer if required. In this process, they should pay close consideration to any justifications or explanations that set out why either the four factors identified above do not apply (e.g. the operation is small scale) or else are not relevant (e.g. large scale but all operations are undertaken to deliver social objectives and none are designed to make a surplus).

Suggested Review Exercise for CT Operators

It is suggested that each CT undertakes an internal review of its services in the form of a table similar to that indicated below. It is important that the review is undertaken at director / trustee board level and the review outcomes are noted in the minutes. Bear in mind that DfT, DVSA or the Traffic Commissioner may request sight of the review. For those CT operators that do deliver services under contract to a public authority, being able to refer them to the fact that you have formally undertaken this exercise will help allay any concerns that they may have.

Where you make any significant changes to your services or add any new ones, then you will need to update the exercise – we suggest putting this as a repeating item in the Board's annual programme of activities.

Service	Purpose	Cost Basis	Is Service "Commercial"?
<p>List each different type / brand of service that is operated – e.g. Dial-a-Ride, Shopper Bus, Group Travel, Home to School contract provision – each service type or name should have a separate row in the table.</p> <p>NB this only applies to services which use one or more vehicles capable of carrying more than 8 passengers in addition to the driver. Services that <u>only</u> use smaller vehicles do not come within the remit of this guidance, even if they are operated under a permit. You do not need to include them in this table.</p>	<p>State here:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> J How the service operates (e.g. door to door, accessible) J How does delivering the service meet your charitable (or constitutional) objectives J Where the service operates J Target beneficiaries (typical user profile or description – they should be within your constitutional objectives – e.g. young people with disabilities - and align with the relevant classes on your permits) J Why service is important to them (e.g. no alternative options / require particular service quality / low cost) J What are the intended outcomes of the service / social value / public benefit (e.g. improved access 	<p>State how you have determined the costing of the service, and any charging policy e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> J Part or fully subsidised J Marginal costs J Full cost recovery <p>Who pays?</p> <p>How are any incidental (i.e. not deliberate) surpluses allocated?</p> <p>State if volunteers are involved in service delivery.</p> <p>(This needs to confirm that the costing basis does not involve a deliberate intention to make a surplus.)</p>	<p>Yes or No – first three columns should enable a conclusion to be reached.</p>

	<p>and inclusion, reduced loneliness, better passenger experience)</p> <p>) What special or unique qualities are provided (to demonstrate any differentiation you may offer above what might commonly be available in the market)</p> <p>Record any sources or references for the above e.g. constitution, annual accounts, policy statement, research</p>		
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