



**Community
Transport at**



Community Transport Newsletter No.8 May 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.

Council Gives Alternative Transport Options to Berkshire Residents as Readibus has Funding Cut

The Reading Chronicle: "The council has offered alternative transport services to residents after funding cuts mean Readibus will soon no longer be running. The Community Transport Service Readibus will cease to provide its transport services in Newbury and Thatcham following funding cuts on April 16. West Berkshire Council has provided an update on alternative services that are available for local residents who are unable to use public transport due to poor health or mobility issues. Community Transport Services provide transport for eligible people to attend medical appointments, go shopping or to visit friends and relatives (as Covid-19 restrictions allow). Community transport groups operating in Newbury and Thatcham include:

- J Thatcham Volunteer Bureau: operates a Car Scheme for residents living in and around Thatcham - including Hermitage, Cold Ash, Crookham, and Woolhampton. Bookings

can be made by calling: 01635 862306 between 10am and 12 noon Monday to Friday.

- J Volunteer Centre West Berkshire (VCWB): operates a Handybus and a Car Scheme within Newbury and the surrounding areas, contact: Car Scheme on: 01635 49004 between 10am and 1pm Monday to Friday (people requiring assistance to attend medical appointments should contact the Car Scheme rather than Handybus). Handybus (available from mid-April), phone: 01635 37111 between 9am and 1pm Monday to Thursday.
- J Shopmobility (available from mid-April), phone: 01635 523854 between 10am and 3pm Monday to Saturday.

Eligible residents using the Community Car Scheme or Handybus (minibus) will be asked to make a contribution towards the cost of the service. The fee will be discussed whilst making a booking. When possible, service users are asked to give at least three days' notice prior to a journey being made. Information on all community transport schemes operating in West Berkshire, along with details on other local groups, can be found on the council's website

<https://info.westberks.gov.uk/communitytransport>.

Anyone with specific needs or requiring more information can contact the council's Transport Team by email:

Transport@westberks.gov.uk or by phone: 01635 519394.

<https://www.readingchronicle.co.uk/news/19229923.council-give-alternative-transport-options-residents-readibus-funding-cut/>

Plus more on this story here:

<https://www.newburytoday.co.uk/news/bitter-end-for-readibus-service-in-newbury-9194687/>

<https://www.readingchronicle.co.uk/news/19216070.council-give-alternative-transport-options-residents-readibus-funding-dispute/>

<https://www.newburytoday.co.uk/news/anger-and-despair-of-newbury-areas-readibus-users-9195662/>

<https://www.readingchronicle.co.uk/news/19229923.council-give-alternative-transport-options-residents-readibus-funding-cut/>

<https://www.readingchronicle.co.uk/news/19245274.tory-council-leaders-defend-readibus-funding-cut/>



Wales Wind Fund Invests First £1m in Local Community

Renews.biz: "Brechfa Forest West Wind Farm Community Fund in Wales has invested its first £1m into projects that support its neighbouring communities in Carmarthenshire. The fund is directly linked to the operation of the RWE-owned and operated Brechfa Forest wind farm. It has also allocated a further £400,000 to support projects that benefit communities living within 6 km of the project. To support local awareness of the fund, a new dedicated website has launched, which highlights how the 86 awards are making a difference to the local area. Katy Woodington, UK community investments manager, RWE Renewables, said: 'It's fantastic to see our neighbouring communities use the fund as an opportunity to bring forward new projects that are so valuable to local people. Social projects such as a luncheon club in Brechfa; innovative projects such as the electric community car share club; and urgently needed projects such as the extensive improvement works to numerous community halls in the area. With the fund committing more than £11million over the lifetime of the wind farm, this is just the beginning of the story of the positive legacy the development will leave in the area and we can't wait to see what happens next.' The Brechfa Forest West Community Fund is administered independently by Antur Teifi, and will provide an overall £11m funding legacy over the operational lifetime of the 28 turbine wind farm."

<https://renews.biz/66999/wales-wind-fund-invests-first-1m-in-local-community/>



Community Transport Services Back on Board

Tivi-Side Advertiser: "Community Transport services are ready to welcome passengers back safely to services across south Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire, as COVID lockdown and travel restrictions are lifted over the coming weeks. Grants totalling £38,000 from Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services and the Welsh Government have provided PPE for staff and volunteer drivers. In addition, specialist misting equipment will ensure that vehicles can be cleaned quickly and effectively between services, and funding to enhance dial-a-ride services to meet passenger needs while social distancing requirements continues. Debbie Johnson from Pembrokeshire Association of Community Transport Organisations said: 'If you are nervous about getting out and about again after lockdown, Pembrokeshire's community transport services are here to support you. We have extra COVID safety measures in place, carry small numbers of passengers with social distancing in place, and will guarantee your seat for your journey out and back.' Services include door-to-door Town Rider services in all Pembrokeshire's main towns and Cardigan, operated by Preseli Green Dragon, as well as flexible rural dial a-ride services in the areas around Narberth (the Bloomfield bus), the Preseli Hills (Green Dragon) and the new Fflecsi service which operates throughout Northwest Pembrokeshire and the St David's Peninsular (Pembrokeshire Voluntary Transport). The Pembrokeshire County Cars service, run by Royal Voluntary Service volunteers, continues to help people with essential shopping journeys and journeys to medical appointments, as they have done throughout the pandemic. PACTO's Bus

Buddies can provide extra support and advice to anyone who needs help to travel by public or community transport, or who is anxious about getting out and-about again."

<https://www.tivysideadvertiser.co.uk/news/19173805.community-transport-services-back-board/> Also here: <https://www.westerntelegraph.co.uk/news/19182825.pacto-community-transport-ready-get-pembrokeshire-connected/>

Meanwhile, the Fflecsi service operated by Pembrokeshire Voluntary Transport is hosting an online information event on 19 May.

<https://www.westerntelegraph.co.uk/news/19271544.pembrokeshire-bus-service-fflecsi-hosting-online-info-event/>



DVSA Introduces New Serious Incident Reporting System for Bus and coach Operators

Driver & Vehicle Standards Agency:

"You will be able to report serious incidents to us with greater ease through a new online form available on a computer, tablet or smartphone. We've worked with the PSV industry on the new PSV112 form to make it easier for you to report an incident and help us manage the case. The new PSV112 online form will be available from today (6 April). We've also updated the ER112 form for serious incidents involving Earned Recognition bus and coach operators.

You must report serious incidents to us immediately so we can help prevent further incidents where possible. If in doubt report an incident anyway. Once you've made a report you will receive confirmation that the report has been submitted and we will aim to be in contact within 2 working days to confirm if the vehicle needs to be inspected. Failure to inform us of a reportable incident may result in enforcement action and operators should not use or repair an affected vehicle before we respond to the report. Incidents to

report - You must by law report incidents where any failure or damage may affect the safety of passengers or other road users, including:

-) fatalities
-) serious injuries (such as broken bones, damage to major organs or overnight hospitalisation)
-) a safety critical system failure (such as brake failure or wheel loss)
-) significant body damage (such as a bridge strike)
-) a vehicle fire (including arson)
-) a suspected serious safety defect."

We understand that s19 operations in vehicles with over 8 passenger seats are included in the scope of this system.

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKDVSA/bulletins/2cb68c0>



Fundraising: Lakeland Community Care Stepping Out for Challenge

Impartial Reporter: "Lakeland Community Care Office Staff are undertaking a Stepathlon challenge during the month of March to raise funds to provide the isolated elderly with additional resources to assist with the isolation that has resulted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The staff of the two main offices in Fermanagh and Omagh will be running a competition between themselves to see which branch can rack up the largest number of steps. Funds raised will benefit the elderly across the Fermanagh and Omagh areas and will be used towards providing nutritious meals, health and well-being packs, local shop vouchers and community transport to live well in the comfort of their own homes and within their local communities. This financial support will help deliver a programme of mental health initiatives to ensure the elderly in our local communities are catered for and enabling them to gain access to local

facilities. If you wish to donate to their endeavour you can donate via the GoFundMe page - <https://tinyurl.com/wjc4dm9v> or the PayPal link available at paypal.me/lakelandcare. To keep up to date with the endeavour you can follow the team on Facebook. The two offices will be available for donations or monies can be posted to either; Belcoo Healthy Living, 1 Lattone Road, Belcoo, BT93 5AQ (Fermanagh office) or 4L Gortrush Industrial Estate, Omagh, BT78 5EJ (Omagh office)."

<https://www.impartialreporter.com/news/19170975.fundraising-lakeland-community-care-stepping-challenge/>



GoStart Community Transport Gets Royal Approval

John Philips at GoStart Community Transport was pleased to find that the Suffolk CT's operations during the pandemic had not gone unnoticed. The CT has received the The Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk Award "in recognition of outstanding service to the community in Suffolk during the COVID-19 pandemic." Clare, Countess of Euston's citation for the special Certificate of Merit reads "the innovation, collaboration, courage and generosity shown across the County by so many at this time has been truly inspirational and uplifting... You are a shining example of all that is best in this country."

<https://www.facebook.com/GoStart-Community-Transport-260349620673223/>



Town Council's Precept Hike Means Tax Bill is Higher in Sawbridgeworth than Stortford – CT to blame?

Bishop's Stortford Independent: "Residents in Sawbridgeworth will pay more than people in Bishop's Stortford in council tax for the next financial year (2021-22). An overall 4.39% rise in council tax bills from April has been confirmed for people living in Sawbridgeworth, while those in Stortford are faced with a hike of 4.12%. Residents in a Sawbridgeworth band D property must pay an extra £1.59 a week for councils' services and policing – up £82.43 from the current £1,876.46 to £1,958.89. In Stortford, the new rate is £1,931.40. This figure is the combined total of contributions that go to Hertfordshire County Council (76%), Herts Police and Crime Commissioner (11%), East Herts Council (9%) and Sawbridgeworth Town Council (4%). The latter is raising its portion of the bill by 6.6% – an increase of £5.95 for a band D property. This increase comes in part for the town council's aim to give the SawboBus – its community transport scheme – a more certain future. For the past decade, the bus service, which was set up in November 2009 to replace the axed SW1, 2 and 3 services, has received funding from the district council but the town councillors are expecting to see this grant cut by 50%. SawboBus records an average of 22,000 passenger journeys a year, so town councillors are keen to see it become self-sustaining..."

<https://www.bishopstortfordindependent.co.uk/news/town-council-s-precept-hike-means-tax-bill-is-higher-in-sawb-9181560/>



On-demand Rural Buses Plan for Shropshire Villages

Shropshire Star: "Isolated villagers could soon have access to public transport for the first time under plans for a new bus service connecting the county's rural communities. Proposals being drawn up by Shropshire Council could see on-demand, bookable vehicles brought in to link passengers with existing routes, which could themselves see an increase in frequency and fare reductions. It is hoped the new service, branded Rural Connect, will be introduced in trial areas of the county later this year. While the authority anticipates the service could be largely self-funded, the plans have also been boosted by yesterday's announcement from the Department for Transport (DfT) of a new £3 billion bus strategy. Speaking at a meeting of the council's communities overview committee, passenger transport group manager James Willocks said it was unlikely bus use would return to pre-Covid levels for several years, 'unless we do something innovative'. Low passenger numbers already meant that two thirds of services relied on council subsidies before the pandemic. 'I think we all know the bus industry has been in decline for some time,' said Mr Willocks. 'We think we can build back better and have a better public transport offer, especially for rural communities in Shropshire who sometimes haven't even got the option of a bus service, let alone a frequent one.' Rural Connect would operate according to the needs of different areas of the county, and four models have so far been identified for trials. This "modular approach" would be developed with significant involvement from communities, Mr Willocks said. The proposed models include an 'inter-urban' service, with Rural Connect buses taking people to meet established bus and train routes operating between the larger towns, and a 'cross-boundary' service which would improve connectivity with towns in neighbouring counties and the rural areas in between. A 'flexible' bus network would be introduced in market towns, with bookable vehicles travelling out to areas not covered by timetabled routes. The final model proposed is a 'small communities link', which would see frequent buses serving communities currently reliant on irregular services operating sometimes on just a few days a week, or none at all. Buses would take passengers to the nearest

towns, with Rural Connect vehicles available to take people either to join the main service or directly to their final destination. Mr Willocks said the next steps were to fully understand the impact of the pandemic on people's transport needs, obtain funding from the DfT and identify pilot areas. The council will also talk to community transport providers like Shrewsbury Dial-A-Ride, the Friendly Bus in Broseley and Qube in Oswestry, with a view to getting them on board. Following stakeholder and public consultations, the final proposals for the new service would need to go before the council's cabinet for approval. Mr Willocks said: 'I think a lot of it is making sure that we understand people's travel demands and habits going forward. As we come out of the pandemic it's going to be really important for us to start making those consultations and understanding where we are going, but at the same time we have got to be really sharp on the ball here to access DfT funding. Certainly this year we would love to see four of those trial areas underway.' Mr Willocks said if things were to remain as they are, there was a risk of services becoming unsustainable and being withdrawn. He added: 'I think now is the right time to start looking to change, not just for innovation's sake but actually to build on what's happened over the last 12 months of the pandemic and how people have changed their habits.' Committee chairman Councillor Cecilia Motley said Mr Willocks and his team had taken on an 'absolutely huge job'. She said: 'I think this could actually transform the whole area of transport in Shropshire and in particular this business of connectivity for the rural areas.' The committee agreed to invite Mr Willocks back in six months to give an update."

<https://www.shropshirestar.com/news/local-hubs/shrewsbury/2021/03/17/plans-to-provide-rural-bus-services-revealed/>



Obituary: Fred Standen, a 'True Character' of Village Cricket...and CT

Royston Crow: "Tributes have been paid to a Melbourn cricketer who was 'a true character' of the village game. Frederick Harry George Standen died in January at the age of 90. Born on June 15, 1930, he was known and admired in local sporting circles but his main notoriety came from village cricket where he was hailed as one of the best wicket keepers around... In 2001, 50 years after first playing for Melbourn, Fred played in a particularly memorable match away to Bugbrooke, a village in Northamptonshire. The match was played on the day of the Bugbrooke wicket keeper's 90th birthday, Fred at the time was a mere youngster at only 71. Outside of sport Fred was active in the community and for almost 20 years he was a volunteer driver with Royston Community Transport and Heron, taking people to hospital and for shopping trips. He was also a lifelong supporter of SCOPE and Cancer Research charities. But it will be in sport where he is truly remembered and as friend Richard Cooper said: 'What an innings, what a sportsman.'"

<https://www.royston-crow.co.uk/sport/melbourn-cricket-club-fred-standen-obituary-7828552>



USA – Community Hot-Rod Project!

Keyt.Com: "The days of raising the hood on a car and doing basic maintenance are not over, especially with the help of a group coming together in Goleta [California]. The Community Hot Rod Project is revved up to not only do some standard services on vehicles, but to show owners how to do-it-themselves. At a recent outreach event, cars were lined up for oil changes, diagnostics, washing and detailing...Part of the program including supplies paid for

through fundraising. Community Hot Rod Project Coordinator, Kevin Haeberle said, 'we just want to make sure that cars in our community are safe on the road.' He also hopes to reach out to young people who are looking for hands-on skills that could launch a career with math, science or engineering. 'With a lack of vocational programs here in town and in our community in general, we wanted to pay it forward and teach the next generation,' said Haeberle. Under the hood during an oil change, it didn't take long to get the job done at a substantial discount from taking it in to a professional repair shop.

"'Less than a half hour and you will probably save 40 bucks,' said Haeberle. 'It's preventative maintenance. You don't want to all of a sudden to be out on a road trip and you are stranded in the middle of nowhere and have a 25-cent gasket (go out) that you could have changed months ago that would have saved you hundreds of dollars.' He said it is knowing your car, 'and being attentive.' One of the group's outreach efforts is to find those who are living below the poverty line or living out of their vehicle to make sure that if they have a vehicle that it is in good operating condition. 'We're all family in this together and we treat everybody the same way,' said Haeberle about his desire to help those who are financially struggling. With a solid base of supporters now and more joining, 'they care and they love our vision for what we see going on with this program and there is a need for it.'"

<https://keyt.com/lifestyle/community/2021/03/15/community-car-care-project-helps-those-in-need-and-others-trying-to-save-money/>



Denbighshire Dial-A-Ride Has been Rewarded for its Efforts Throughout the Pandemic

The Free Press: "A Denbighshire charity which has been lending a helping hand to residents throughout the pandemic is among the recipients of this year's St

David's Awards. The awards, now in their eighth year, are a chance to acknowledge the extraordinary achievements of people in or from Wales and recognise the great deeds and contributions made by people from all walks of life. This year's ceremony, held virtually on Wednesday, March 24, highlighted those who have stood out during an exceptionally difficult year in 2020. Among the winners was Denbighshire Dial-A-Ride, based in Rhyl, whose services stretch as far out as Denbigh. The charity, which provides fully accessible door to door transport to people in the county who cannot use regular public transport, received the 'Community Spirit' prize at the St David's Awards. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic meant a change in the way Denbighshire Dial-A-Ride operated. In March 2020, following the lockdown announcement, it introduced a new service to collect prescriptions and shopping for anyone who needed them – such as people who were shielding – rather than just to members. It has also recently introduced the 'Buddy' service where passengers can request that one of Dial a Ride's drivers accompany them as they do their shopping and has helped them regain their confidence. Speaking having been awarded the Community Spirit prize, Denbighshire Dial-A-Ride Administration Assistant Rhys Fairhurst said: 'We were very proud to have just made the final three, let alone end up winning. We're all overwhelmed and we really didn't expect to win at all. We were all close to tears I think! The work Beverley Mather (the charity's manager) and the team have done since the first lockdown has been incredible. They have done everything possible to make things work.' Denbighshire Dial-A-Ride is now in the process of establishing a new space close to its base in Rhyl, where minibus driver training will take place..."

<https://www.denbighshirefreepress.co.uk/news/19187644.rhyl-based-charity-rewarded-efforts-throughout-pandemic/>



Team North Yorkshire: Scarborough Dial A Ride "came like the cavalry over the hill to support us"

The Scarborough News: "Community transport organisations are a crucial element of the transport network in North Yorkshire, run by the community, for the community. In the year since lockdown was first introduced, volunteers have come forward in their thousands to help those in need across the country. Yet some organisations have existed thanks solely to the work of their generous volunteers for many decades. One area where people have happily been donating their time is community transport. Whether it's a journey people make every day or a one-off trip, community transport helps people get to where they need to be. They are important for helping people to get out and about, access services and see friends and family. One such organisation is Scarborough Dial A Ride which has been operating in the town for almost 40 years. The service began in 1983 as part of a project for the Scarborough District Voluntary service and in 1994 became an independent charity. Service manager, Julie Banks, joined initially as an admin assistant and has been with the organisation for more than 26 years. She has seen a number of changes in the time, but none have been as challenging as the last 12 months. Julie said: 'We are centred around Covid at the moment. We never stopped and quickly adapted to operate safely. When Covid hit we lost 75% of our volunteers due to shielding, but then the number of journeys dropped off the edge of a cliff as well. We spent a lot of money on sanitising equipment and invested very early on in a fogging machine. We are still taking people to most things, the ones with no family to rely on. When we're taking people for jobs, for some of them it's the only time they have been out in a year. We have one paid driver and two paid escorts who thought it important to keep coming in and keep that routine. We do special needs school runs and we've still been able to do those. We do charge - the school runs buoy up the rest of the service. We're about the third of the cost of a taxi and we charge £3 a year membership. We operate Monday to Friday and we ask people to give us as much notice as they can, but if you phone

on the day and we've got space we will take you. Tell us what time you want to go and where you are going. There is no restriction on what you need transport for.

If people want to join, all they have to do is give us a ring. Some of our volunteers have been with us for 10,12 or even 18 years, so we must be doing something right. All they get in return is tea, coffee and biscuits and the thanks of the people they take.' Helen Todd is one of Dial a Ride's few paid members of staff. She started out as a volunteer in January 2005 and after volunteering with the organisation for 15 months, became their only employed driver. Hele, was a chef by trade, but stopped when she had children, she said: 'The hours were rubbish and the money not so good. I felt like a change. I was in a position to do voluntary work, so I thought I'd give it a try in between the school runs and the rest is history. Even now, I still look forward to getting up in the morning. It's so rewarding, you feel as if you've done something to help somebody every day of the week. Tony Kirby has volunteered with Dial A Ride for more than six years. He said: 'One day I just walked into the place, why or how I don't know. I said I'd like to volunteer, I got into it and I love it. It structures your week. Through Covid it has been absolutely brilliant not to be sat in the house. It's something to get up and get out for. I love doing my bit.' Bob Monaghan signed up after retiring in 2008. After a year of doing jobs around the house he began to get bored and he looked for something else to do. He said: 'As luck would have it, I saw dial-a-ride advertising in the paper. I just enjoy driving and it's somebody else's fuel. I enjoy meeting people, it's as good for me as it is for them. I get so much pleasure and goodness out of it for myself, I like doing it.' Passenger assistant Frank McAdam first volunteered with the service in 1999. He said: 'I sometimes do the school run for the SEN kids to Springhead, we take care of them and their parents trust us with their lives. I absolutely love it. Taking the children is such a joy, they're so appreciative and so grateful. We're still taking a few of them at the moment, and I'm just waiting to see them all again. It's like a family, but it's a family that doesn't fall out. Helen's a lovely girl, that's the sort of volunteers we have. We all help each other.'" Bill Scott and his wife Anne are regular users of the service.

Mr Scott said: 'I'm 88 and my wife is 80 and we're both in fragile health, we can still walk, but not far. We usually use them for medical reasons such as going to the surgery or hospital in York. Very occasionally we take a trip to the supermarket or go up to Seamer to see our disabled son. They are always on time and all have comical approaches to life. You get some banter. Occasionally they might pick up another passenger and you might have to go another route and you see part of Scarborough you've not seen before. I had been having to visit the eye clinic at Scarborough Hospital and then I was transferred to York because they have a better eye department and expertise. Dial A Ride was thankfully able to take me there. Originally my wife would help me along, but during the pandemic she wasn't allowed in York Hospital. The drivers and assistants were very, very good. They accompanied me and ensured I didn't have any problems. They are always waiting for me when I come out. I'm extremely grateful for that. My wife uses them for the doctor's surgery and Bridlington Hospital and Dial A Ride came again like the cavalry coming over the hill to support us. I don't know what we would have done without Dial A Ride. I often wonder to be honest, we couldn't do it without them.' Another lady from Seamer uses Dial A Ride every week to do her weekly shop at Morrison's. She said: 'Dial A Ride pick me up and take me into town. They ask how long I want in town and drop me where I want to be. I keep telling people about them. They are brilliant with me and for other people in the same boat. Helen and Julie and all lovely and we have a bit of a laugh and a joke with them.' If you would like to get in touch with Dial A Ride you can contact them by calling 01723 354434."

<https://www.thescarboroughnews.co.uk/news/people/team-north-yorkshire-scarborough-dial-a-ride-came-like-the-cavalry-over-the-hill-to-support-us-3179843>



Covid One Year On: How the Huntingdonshire Volunteer Centre has Supported the Community

The Hunts Post: "The Huntingdonshire Volunteer Centre talks about how it stepped in to support the community during the Covid-19 pandemic. Volunteers run four community car schemes, using their own cars to offer transport to those who need help. Manager Ann Bunting said: 'The car scheme usage fell as people stayed at home and shielded, but with extra COVID-19 procedures in place for our volunteer drivers, we still served the community enabling essential car scheme journeys to continue.' The scheme was able to help 1,131 people to attend essential hospital appointments and later vaccination appointments. A total of 20,901 miles was covered and 2,169 journeys took place. Volunteers have also been able to support people to do their shopping and was able to deliver more than 40 hot Christmas lunches to people in the St Ives area. The volunteers were supported by Mike Baker, chairman of the volunteer centre, who worked with St Ives Community Hub, Councillor Philip Pope, St Ives deputy town mayor, Pasco Hussain and Rotary volunteers from St Ives and Huntingdon. They also run a scheme called (NATTER) which stands for Neighbourly Afternoon Tea Time Exchanging Reminiscences. This was a project which was used to reduce isolation in the community, which took place before lockdown. Ann said: 'There would be 25 people who would meet monthly, out and around parts of St Neots for a lunch and for some sort of activity. Be it a quiz, and we used our car scheme and volunteers to make that all happen. That would take place in the ex-services club and we would normally have an outing in the summer. To make them feel not forgotten during the lockdown, we provided 30 hampers within the community.'"

<https://www.huntspost.co.uk/news/huntingdonshire-volunteer-centre-have-helped-7828376>



TaxiCard Scheme Withdrawal to Affect over 1,400 Aberdeenshire Residents

Grampian Online: "As part of its budget savings, Aberdeenshire Council has approved the withdrawal of the TaxiCard concessionary travel scheme - the last day of operation will be Friday, April 23. A spokesman for the council said: 'The council's Passenger Transport Unit, which administers the scheme, will write to the 1,450 residents who are on record as holding a TaxiCard to advise them of the scheme's withdrawal and to provide a contact telephone number should cardholders require advice on alternative transport services such as A2B dial-a-bus or community transport where available. Along with all local authorities, Aberdeenshire Council continues to face significant financial challenges in light of the Covid pandemic and sadly has had to make tough decisions which do have an impact on communities. The decision to withdraw the TaxiCard scheme has not been taken lightly and the council will do all that it can to support all those cardholders to access appropriate transport when they require it.' For full details on the scheme visit <https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/public-transport/concessionary-travel/taxicard>." <https://www.grampianonline.co.uk/news/taxicard-scheme-withdrawal-to-affect-over-1400-aberdeenshire-232209/>

New Zealand - Volunteers Buckle in and Knuckle down, Passing 1,000 Trips in Five Years

Stuff.Co.NZ: "The voluntary driver of a community vehicle service that transported their 1,000th passenger this week, said he finds the job 'quite entertaining'. Evin Wood has been driving for the Marlborough Community Vehicle Trust for about three years and undertook the 1,000th passenger journey of the service on Thursday morning, driving his passenger from Rarangi to the Alzheimer Centre in Blenheim. Retiree Wood said volunteering gives him the opportunity to meet other people, as well as keeping up his driving skills, as he does not own a car. 'If I can help somebody, my living has not been in vain,' he said, referring to a blues song by Mahalia Jackson. The Trust was set up in 2016 to provide a transport service for

medical patients between their homes and appointments in Blenheim and Nelson. Wood said his most memorable trip was a 'scary' one he undertook after dark in heavy rainfall from Nelson to Picton. 'The road was flooding and the car started to plane on the wet roads through the Rai Valley,' he said. Wood's passenger on Thursday, who declined to be named, said the service was fantastic and a great help. He had been using the service twice a week for the past 3 months, and was full of praise for the 'marvellous' service. Marlborough Community Vehicle Trust collected its 500th passenger in 2019, when Warren Lane was transported from his home in Waikawa by driver Judy Neil. This week the Trust transported its 1,000th passenger...The non-profit Trust is funded by sponsorship from 20-30 sponsors, which include the Marlborough District Council and the Nelson Marlborough District Health Board. 'If we carry nobody, it means there's no need,' said [Trust chairman] Brian Strong. 'But if there is a need, people should know about it!'

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/marlborough-express/news/300250113/volunteers-buckle-in-and-knuckle-down-passing-1000-trips-in-five-years>



USA - Dial-A-Ride hits Lows during Pandemic

Crawford County Avalanche: "In Grayling it is often commonplace to see one of the many large gray Crawford County Transportation Authority buses moving about, transporting passengers to many different locations, offering services from Grayling, Frederic, Maple Forest, Beaver Creek, South Branch, Roscommon, and Lovells with maintained schedules to help citizens plan ahead and get where they need to go. During the COVID-19 pandemic all local businesses have felt the strain and stress of keeping their doors open, and bus doors are no different. 'Our ridership in

2020 just plummeted for the obvious reason. 2021 is looking a little brighter for us, we seem to be a bit busier and people are starting to feel more comfortable using public transportation again. We are at about 70 per cent ridership compared to 2019,' said Julee Dean, Executive Director of the CCTA. There have been different hurdles and standards that all businesses have had to overcome and meet, many of which have become common and not out of the ordinary anymore. Masks and social distancing are, as always, the easiest and first line of safety and defense. The safety of drivers, passengers, and CCTA employees is Dean's first priority.

'Buses are now equipped with a touch-free hand sanitizer and everyone is required to wear a mask when using public transportation. We purchased a disinfecting, sanitizing sprayer that is used inside the buses at the end of the day. Buses are still hand cleaned and disinfected on a regular basis,' said Dean.

Currently the CCTA has a fleet of 16 buses and three vans. All of the buses are equipped with wheelchair lift equipment to better serve as many citizens in the community as possible. Inside the CCTA offices they follow all the same regulations as other businesses; masks and social distancing, stickers on the floor and plexiglass barriers to separate employees, and all doorknobs and light switches are sanitized on a daily basis. All things in line with being compliant with new rules as they come, according to Dean. 'We're ready to get through COVID, as is everybody. We are all looking forward to serving our community in that capacity that we used to. We will eventually get there,' said Dean.

Along with the changes to the buses and building, other changes were needed and had to be implemented to help cope with the strain brought on by COVID-19. CCTA had to remove Saturday services, but they hope to return to Saturday services very soon, according to Dean. 'About half of CCTA employees went on voluntary unemployment at the start of the pandemic. It worked out well because we did not have a need for all employees working at that time. When school resumed and ridership started to increase, I needed all of those employees back to run smoothly and efficiently,' said Dean.

Dial-A-Ride is a federally and state-funded resource; it does not rely or survive off of

passenger fares. The CCTA is not looking to increase fare prices as they are, as it understands that many who use public transportation also struggle to make ends meet every day, according to Dean. Fares inside the county are currently posted as fifty cents for children, those with disabilities, and seniors, adults pay a dollar per ride. 'We try to let people know that we have their safety in mind. The hand sanitizers (in buses), wearing masks, and keeping the buses disinfected helps most feel more comfortable. I'm sure our ridership will return back to 2019 numbers once the pandemic is officially in the past,' said Dean. While employees seem to be handling the changes and lingering pandemic with professionalism and acceptance, they do face some of the same issues as any business or store with some riders not wanting to adhere to the health and safety standards. But on a bus, in close quarters, the mask requirement is non-negotiable, according to Dean. 'Making bus transportation safe for everyone is our number one priority. I would just like to thank the community for their continued support of Dial-A-Ride,' said Dean."

<http://www.crawfordcountyavalanche.com/news/dial-ride-hits-lows-during-pandemic>



Community Transport Association – Recent Updates
 Briefing: the UK Government's National Bus Strategy: "Last month, the UK Government released its national Bus Strategy 'Bus Back Better' setting out its plans for improving bus services in England and signifying the Government's first step back from the deregulation of buses in 1986. The Strategy equips both national and local governments with greater powers to plan and run bus services and will introduce several key changes, including a move towards Enhanced Partnerships and franchising, changes to funding, greater

support for demand-responsive transport, and new zero-emission buses."
<https://ctauk.org/briefing-national-bus-strategy/>

Fill in our COVID-19 survey and help us tell your story: "In 2020, we released a series of reports about the work of the sector which were well received by funders and led to many great conversations and invitations to bid for funding. We want to continue this work in 2021 – making it clear and obvious how important the community transport sector has been since the start of the pandemic. We're asking our members to fill in a survey looking at the work they've been doing over the last year and the impact it's had."
<https://ctauk.org/fill-in-our-covid-19-survey/>

Online Event Recap: Understanding Full Cost Recovery: "Following the introduction of the Department for Transport's guidance on section 19 and 22 permits at the end of last year, CTA has been helping members get to grips with the implications of that guidance for their services...To help members work this through in their own organisations, Anna Whitty MBE, from Ealing Community Transport and Peter Haley, from People to Places led a session on full cost recovery and how that can help members navigate their obligations."
<https://ctauk.org/recap-full-cost-recovery/>

Our categories for the 2021 Community Transport Awards: "We're excited to announce the categories for this year's Community Transport Awards! The awards are taking place online on Thursday 18 November and are a fantastic opportunity to come together as a sector and celebrate the incredible work our members have done over the last year. 2020 was a difficult one for everyone in the community transport sector, but time and again we've seen our members adapting and innovating to support the people in their communities who need them the most. The 2021 Community Transport Awards will recognise examples of excellence from across the sector in the following categories:

- J Community Transport Provider of the Year
- J Partnership of the Year
- J Volunteer of the Year
- J Keeping in Touch

-) Commitment to Sustainability
-) Volunteer Car Scheme of the Year
-) Community Transport Champion
-) Photo Competition
-) Lifetime Achievement Award

<https://ctauk.org/2021-awards-categories/>



Community Transport Organisations are a Crucial Element of the Transport Network in North Yorkshire, run by the Community, for the Community

Harrogate Advertiser: "In the year since lockdown was first introduced, volunteers have come forward in their thousands to help those in need across the country. Yet some organisations have existed thanks solely to the work of their generous volunteers for many decades. One area where people have happily been donating their time is community transport. Whether it's a journey people make every day or a one-off trip, community transport can help people get to where they need to be. They are important for helping people to get out and about, access services and see friends and family. One such organisation is Boroughbridge Community Care (BCC), which has been providing transport for the people of Boroughbridge since 1974. In normal times, BCC would take people on days out to the coast, the theatre and many other places of interest. However, when lockdown came into force last March, all day trips were forced to come to an abrupt halt. The team evaluated what it could do to help. Karen Parker, the charity's general manager said: 'In September we started to offer transport to medical appointments. We installed screens around drivers and gave them full PPE including face shields, masks and hand sanitisers.' Prior to Covid, BCC had also offered car transport, and in January they decided that they were able to offer this to

one person or couple at a time so as to keep the driver safe. When Covid vaccinations began, the organisation linked up with Church Lane doctor's surgery to ensure those who were offered vaccinations were also able to get there. Karen said: 'Normally we have 100+ volunteers, but when lockdown came, all volunteers over 70 were stood down. It brought in a much younger demographic and I think we will retain a lot of those. They are finding it really rewarding.' Nic Holmes, from Upper Dunsforth, has been a volunteer for six years and a trustee for four. He drives both the minibus and his own car. Nic, 61, said the decision to get involved came out of the blue: 'Very simply, I saw a poster outside Morrison's looking for minibus drivers and I've been doing it ever since. In normal times I've taken the minibus to Lindisfarne, Whitby, Skegness, Holy Island. These day trips are usually for the elderly with no other form of transport. Most of the enjoyment seems to be sitting on the bus with their mates. The other aspect is local schools - taking small groups to sports and academic events. We do a fair amount with them it's probably true to say that in normal times schools make up 50% of the minibus usage. We are massively dependent on volunteers, they are very important to keep organisations like ours going.' Phill Brownley, started as a volunteer back in 2018 when he moved from Harrogate to Boroughbridge. Phill, 66, said: 'I'd got some free time and I wanted to do something with it for the community. It's a door to door service and it's brilliant to know you can help your own neighbour. Barbara and Karen are doing a fantastic job to coordinate this. Really it is a fantastic service.' Mark Bailey, 57, explained what the role entails: 'It's a pleasure and a privilege to be a BCC Volunteer car and Community Minibus driver. I see it as doing my small bit to help the predominantly older members of our local community. I travel to hospitals in Harrogate, York, Ripon and Leeds taking people for hospital appointments, Covid tests and Covid jab. I've met some fascinating people a former jockey and racehorse trainer, a bank manager, a head gardener, a nurse and a CEO of a charity. The job is about driving, but many haven't spoken to anybody for a few days so the chat and banter is equally important.' Clive Wilson, 89, lives in Kirby Hill near Boroughbridge. A former volunteer

driver himself, he knows first-hand the value of the service the charity provides. Clive said: 'I go to York Hospital for treatment for macular degeneration and they literally take me from front door to front door. It's absolutely wonderful to have this service. They all drive very comfortable cars and even the minibus is top of the range and very comfortable. I cannot speak highly enough of this fantastic service at a minimum charge. All you've got to do is pick up the phone and speak to Karen or Barbara. There is transport via North Yorkshire Ambulance Service, but you've got to qualify for that and it goes round all the villages, it can take forever to get home. Honestly, it is a superb service and we are so lucky to have it in Boroughbridge.' Maggie Fink, 86, who lives in Boroughbridge, used to go on the various day trips BCC offered. She said the service allows her to maintain her independence: 'I've had several appointments during lockdown. They pick me up, wait for me until the appointment is finished and take me home again. I just want to say a huge thank you to them all and also to Barbara and Karen for organising it all. They are the ones who ring round and arrange everything. I think they are very special.' If you would like to volunteer or if you need assistance contact Boroughbridge Community Care on 01423 324504."

<https://www.harrogateadvertiser.co.uk/news/people/boroughbridge-community-care-offer-the-elderly-the-chance-to-get-out-and-about-3179915>



Free Transport Offered to Vulnerable Patients through Unused Bus Route

Glasgow Times: "Vulnerable patients are being offered free transport to Covid-19

vaccine appointment after new electric buses were funded by SP Energy Networks. As part of their Green Economy Fund, the group has been able to supply two new electric buses on the Riverside 100 bus route, with Glasgow City Council using them to transport patients to appointments while the Riverside Museum remains closed. The shuttle service is being provided in a partnership between the council and Community Transport Glasgow and will run 9am until 8pm seven days a week. Andy Waddell, director of operations at Glasgow City Council, said: 'While the Riverside 100 route is not in service due to lockdown restrictions, the buses that provide the service are not sitting idle. We have re-deployed them along with other electric transport solutions to help the most vulnerable in our community.' Graham Dunn, manager at Community Transport Glasgow, said: 'Everyone at Community Transport Glasgow is proud to support the community during these tough times. The national vaccine rollout is a massive step forward and ensuring vulnerable people in our community can safely attend their appointments is a priority for us.'

<https://www.glasgowtimes.co.uk/news/19191604.free-transport-offered-vulnerable-patients-unused-bus-route/>



Lottery Funding for Community Transport Groups in the East Riding

Planet Radio: "£203,975 of lottery funding will enable community transport groups in the East Riding get more people to their hospital appointments in a new project that is to be called Home to Hospital (H2H). The East Yorkshire Community Transport (EYCT), have been successful in their bid to the lottery for funding which will help them deliver transport services to

residents in Bridlington who need to attend hospital appointments at Hull and Scarborough hospitals. In 2008, Holderness Area Rural Transport (HART) and Goole Gofar came together and formed EYCT to enable them to work together in partnership, sharing resources and information to help secure the community transport offer. The groups have worked throughout the last 12 months to ensure their passengers were able to attend local hospitals and access centres to receive their vaccinations. Further funding from the lottery will now secure the future of the groups for a further three years. Councillor Gary McMaster, portfolio holder for enhancing communities, said: 'We are delighted to continue to support the East Yorkshire Community Transport group and are pleased to see the successful bid for further lottery funding. The last twelve months has proven how vital this community transport offering is to our communities with really important trips to the local hospitals and vaccination centres. We are pleased to continue to work closely with the EYCT to benefit our residents.' Cllr Jane Evison, chair of EYCT, added: 'We are very pleased to have been awarded this amazing grant which allows us to continue helping those people who live in our towns & villages to get to hugely important hospital appointment. The HART service was particularly well received in Bridlington when the existing transport to the Scarborough and Hull hospitals was withdrawn over a year ago, this money will now allow us to help far more people. I am also aware that the service is under great demand in the Goole and Howden area. At a time when people need our services and support more than ever, we are delighted to be able to offer our help. We work closely with East Riding of Yorkshire Council's transportation team to ensure our services compliment those already on offer and our thanks to the council for the tremendous support we receive. The award of this grant from the lottery provides the financial security we need to reach our more vulnerable residents and also work to attract more volunteers into our groups to help deliver them.'"

<https://planetradio.co.uk/greatest-hits/yorkshire-coast/news/lottery-funding-for-east-riding-community-transport-groups>



Transport Firm Starts Electric Car-share Club for Weardale Community

Northern Echo: "A community transport charity is to start an electric car share for people living in a rural dale. Weardale Community Transport was set up in 2005 by Weardale Community Partnership Ltd in response to a locally identified need for accessible, flexible transport. They operate a 'not for profit' service for residents of Weardale, to bridge gaps in services which may not be provided by public transport services and commercial operators in the area. However, WCT is not just about running the community buses; they are involved in the development and delivery of several other projects. One of the new projects is the electric car share scheme which will be run from The Hub in Stanhope. The Hub, which has been closed during the pandemic due to Government guidelines, has continued to offer support by phone. They continued to run schemes including Wheels2Meals clients, Jigsaw Club deliveries, lifts to GP appointments and vaccinations, all provided by WCT. On top of this, continuing to work for North East Ambulance Service Patient Transport Service (NEAS) to alleviate the strain on the NHS and regular ambulance service. Now, they have decided to offer an electric car share club to people in Weardale. The club is to benefit people who cannot access public transport due to mobility or other health issues like anxiety. Another reason for the club is that in rural areas there is no bus service or very infrequent service, and people who cannot afford the cost of car ownership. The club will start with one electric car based in Stanhope and this will hopefully develop over time with additional cars being based in other parts of Weardale. The club should allow local communities to have flexible access to an environmentally friendly mode of transport,

that is available locally and a viable alternative to renting a car. The electric car club will be launched on May 24, 2021. This comes after it was announced in February of the expansion of the electric vehicle charging points across County Durham. This is to help the reach the Government's 2030 deadline of banning petrol and diesel cars. Following a competitive tender by Durham County Council, the contract for the works has been awarded to Grønn Kontakt (UK) Ltd who are working with their trusted delivery partner Elmtronics Ltd, based in Consett. The project will see 20 chargepoints at eight sites across Stanhope, which means that all residents will have a charge point within a five-minute drive from their home. The project is coming with the help of Weardale Area Action Partnership. Both The Durham Dales Centre and The Weardale Railway are on board with the scheme. As a charity WCT have lost all of their income from the community side, which normally involves transport for schools, local groups such as the WI, and Wheels to Meals project which targets people who are lonely or have mobility issues. However, the income from NEAS helps the charity to continue to offer support to the local communities in such challenging times."

<https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/19252248.transport-firm-start-electric-car-share-club-weardale-community/>



Supporting Patients on the Journey from Hospital to Home
 Community360 release: "Patients are being settled back into life at home when they leave hospital thanks to a new service which has launched in north Essex. The escorted home service enables patients with limited mobility to be settled back home safely by a member of Colchester Hospital's therapies team, who checks they have everything they need following their hospital stay, such as equipment. Staff at East Suffolk and North Essex NHS

Foundation Trust (ESNEFT), which runs Colchester and Ipswich hospitals, are providing the service in collaboration with voluntary organisation Community360, which provides the patient transport. Since its launch in January, around 70 patients have returned home in safety with additional support in place. The service has proved such a success that it has recently been awarded additional funding to extend it to operate seven days a week for the next 12 months. Steve Alcock, senior physiotherapy assistant at Colchester Hospital, said: 'It's been fantastic to see the difference we've been able to make for patients after only a few months. We've provided extra support and reassurance to patients who have been worried about how they will manage the journey home, and have worked with our occupational therapists to ensure that the right equipment is in place from day one. The feedback that we've collected tells us that patients have really valued the service.' Tracy Rudling, CEO at Community360 said: 'We are delighted to be involved in the home from hospital service specifically focusing on the early morning discharge, and that the extra funding has been secured. None of us relish the thought of spending time in hospital and the experience can be disorientating. Older people can find it difficult to settle back into home afterwards, especially if they have no-one nearby to support them. Having someone to take them home, being there to give a word of encouragement, make a cup of tea and check that they have everything they need can make all the difference to their long term health and wellbeing.' Benefits of the service include:

- J Patients are given vital support and assistance when they are transferred from hospital transport vehicles into their homes.
- J They are able to take equipment home with them, including large items such as commodes.
- J Therapy staff are able to review the patient's home environment first-hand and quickly reassess their equipment and care if necessary.
- J The service helps to ensure the transition from hospital to home runs smoothly, including handovers to care agencies.

Patients who have benefitted from the service say it has helped them to feel more

confident before they return home as the team can explain how they can help and address any concerns they may have. Some patients have also been discharged sooner thanks to the escorted home service."

<https://www.community360.org.uk/services/community-transport/>



Demand Rises for Frome's New Community Driver Service

In Your Area: "Frome Community Drivers, which is now part of Active and In Touch, is finding its services are in much demand at the moment. Figures show that in just the first three weeks of March, there were already 185 journeys undertaken compared to 115 journeys in both January and February respectively. Morag, who runs the service, said this increased demand has occurred due to more referral from other agencies, taking passengers to routine medical examinations and vaccinations, supporting Frome College students with injuries and regularly taking people to Bristol Eye Hospital and Southmead. Morag has fulfilled a variety of requests including ensuring Frome residents make it on time for vital medical appointments. She co-ordinates the journeys undertaken by her team of more than 25 drivers. One of these is Mervyn, Frome born and bred, who has been a community driver since August 2020. He came to this having previously spent fourteen years driving for Mendip Community Transport and Dial a Ride amongst other organisations. He decided to volunteer for FCD when the lockdown started as he recognised there was a need to help people, especially those who were older, and whilst observing all regulations, still had to get out and about for shopping or visiting the medical centre. Mervyn's local knowledge certainly came in useful for some of his early journeys when Frome

Town Centre was closed and alternative routes were required. Mervyn said he is 'pleased to be a part of this excellent service' paying tribute to Morag's leadership who is 'excellent in her job'. Debbie is also a relatively recent addition to the team. Moving with her partner from Sheffield to Frome two years ago, she has been volunteering since the beginning of the first lockdown. Debbie, who loves driving, wanted to get to know the community in which she has settled and felt this role would be the ideal way to do just that. Her experience in the medical world through working in a large NHS hospital meant that Debbie has worked closely with people and loved hearing about their backgrounds. Debbie said: 'It has been a brilliant way to give something to the community we have moved to. It's a wonderful thing to do and I'm glad I went in that direction. The people I drive are so appreciative of the service'.

As lockdown rules relax the FCD looks forward to continuing its services in providing transport for a wider range of functions. If you would like to book a driver for a forthcoming journey or join the FCD team, please email hello@fromecommunitydrivers.org.uk or call 07596 591391 76516486337 <https://www.inyourarea.co.uk/news/demand-rises-for-fromes-new-community-driver-service/>

Communities go Green with new Electric Vehicles

Daily Record: "Six community transport groups based in Lanarkshire will benefit from new electric vehicles (EVs). The vehicles are being funded from an award of £1.2 million by SP Energy Networks' Green Economy Fund. Three of the transport groups – Getting Better Together Shotts, Cumbernauld Action on Care of the Elderly, and Glenboig Development Trust – have unveiled their new minibuses, vans, and people carriers. The EVs will be used to support vulnerable, disadvantaged and elderly people across Lanarkshire to access vital appointments and community activities. All three organisations have also offered their services to NHS Lanarkshire to assist with the Covid-19 vaccination rollout. The new EVs will be used to replace ageing and increasingly unreliable diesel vehicles that put the organisations' vital community work in jeopardy. Getting Better Together Shotts

(GBT) has received two 16-seat Mellor minibuses and two seven-seater Nissan people carriers to assist them in providing community support services for early years, children and young people and the elderly. Paul Bridges, Head of Transport at GBT Shotts, said: 'We are delighted to be able to begin the move to an electric fleet that will reduce our CO₂ emissions. Cumbernauld Action on Care of the Elderly has been awarded two minibuses to provide door to door services which transport people from their home to its on-site activity suite and events in the local community. Eddie Dunlop, at Cumbernauld Action on Care of the Elderly, said: 'This will be transformational, not only in terms of the environment, but also for the social impact it will have as it assists with our long-term plan to provide vital transport services to the vulnerable communities of North Lanarkshire.' Glenboig Development Trust have received two electric vehicles, a van and a car to provide community support to children and young people and to deliver meals and wellbeing visits to the elderly community. Teresa Aitken from the Trust, said: 'This investment will benefit all aspects of our service users lives, including their health. The vehicles really are a lifeline for so many of our service users, so we couldn't be more grateful for the support we have received from SP Energy Networks.' In the long-term, the new vehicles will enable the groups to reduce their carbon footprints with an expected 32 tonnes reduction in CO₂ emissions in the next year. The other three community organisations being directly funded by SP Energy Networks' Green Economy Fund are, WAT I F; Rural Development Trust; and Larkhall & District Volunteer Group – allowing each of them to purchase 100 per cent electric vehicles that are low floor accessible. The all-electric community vehicles are being funded as part of SP Energy Networks' £20million Green Economy Fund, which supports the Scottish Government's ambitious plans to meet climate change targets. SP Energy Networks is also helping deliver up to 44 new electric vehicle charging hubs across Lanarkshire as part of Project PACE. The Project is being delivered through a strategic partnership between SP Energy Networks and the Scottish Government and so far has already provided 260MWh of energy to

electric vehicles and enabled around 912,940 miles to be driven using clean, green transport. Frank Mitchell, CEO at SP Energy Networks, said: 'Scotland has ambitious plans to be the UK's first net zero country by 2045, but we must ensure that no community is left behind. Helping communities build their own green economy and establish low carbon infrastructure is at the heart of our Green Economy Fund.' For more information on the Green Economy Fund and the projects it supports, visit: [spenergynetworks.co.uk/pages/green_economy_fund.aspx](https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/authors/Lanarkshire-Live/communities-go-green-new-electric-23875587)

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/authors/Lanarkshire-Live/communities-go-green-new-electric-23875587>



Dozens of Older Citizens 'virtually' Attend a Conference
Impartial Reporter: "Dozens of older people from across the Fermanagh and Omagh district attended the annual 'Age Friendly' conference last Wednesday, March 24, which was held virtually for the first time due to Covid-19 restrictions currently in place. The conference, organised by the Council in conjunction with South West Age Partnership, with funding from the Public Health Agency, provided the more than 60 people in virtual attendance with the opportunity to hear from a number of speakers on issues relating five steps to wellbeing – keeping well at home. Welcoming delegates, the Chair of Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, Councillor Diana Armstrong, said: 'The Council is committed to establishing a district in which our older people can live active and engaged lives, making a valuable contribution to their communities. A core objective of the Fermanagh and Omagh Community Plan 2030, which has been developed by the Council in partnership with other key statutory stakeholders, is to help older

people to live more independent, engaged and socially connected lives. The events of the past year have demonstrated the need to be more socially connected than ever, particularly for older people...' In another conference first, all delegates received a conference pack and afternoon tea box delivered by Easilink and Fermanagh Community Transport."

<https://www.impartialreporter.com/news/19213374.dizens-older-citizens-virtually-attend-conference/>



Canada - Government Announces First Federal Fund Dedicated to Rural Transit Solutions

Yahoo: "The Government of Canada is working to secure Canadians' health and safety, rebuild businesses, and promote jobs, growth and renewed investment as we build toward economic recovery and a net-zero emissions future. A key part of this plan is making historic investments in public transit across the country. For Canadians living in rural, remote and small communities, improving the way people access goods and services, get to and from work, to medical appointments, and to various destinations, presents unique challenges that require unique solutions. Today, the Honourable Catherine McKenna, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities and the Honourable Maryam Monsef, Minister for Rural Economic Development, announced \$250 million over five years to help address the transit needs of Canadians living in rural, remote and small communities. The Government of Canada is committed to working with these communities to develop rural transit solutions, and to providing the funding to make those solutions a reality. From on-demand services, to publicly-owned,

electric vehicle ride shares, and volunteer community car-pooling, Canadians outside urban centres have been finding innovative ways to get to the jobs and the goods and services they require. Developed with the goal of creating equity amongst communities across the country, this fund will be the first federal fund dedicated to rural transit. This funding builds on progress made under the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program, which has supported transit projects in smaller communities, from a bus in Selkirk, Manitoba, to a Handi-Van in Fort Frances, Ontario, which helps seniors get around town with accessible options. The Government of Canada has heard loud and clear from rural, remote and small communities that more funding is needed to support unique transportation solutions. There is no one-size-fits-all solution, so a flexible, dedicated Rural Transit Fund will help fund creative projects that address the unique needs of communities. The new \$250 million fund, part of the nearly \$15 billion public transit investment announced last February by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, will help rural, remote and small towns build vibrant communities where people want to live, work and play..."

<https://finance.yahoo.com/news/government-canada-announces-first-federal-144000363.html>



'They're so good' – Great Yarmouth Couple Shielding for Year Praise 'Lifeline' Charity
Great Yarmouth Mercury: An elderly couple who have been shielding for a year have praised staff at a Great Yarmouth charity for providing them with a 'lifeline' during the coronavirus pandemic. Mary Large, 77, and her husband, Alick, 80, have only left their home in Scratby for their first vaccinations and an occasional trip to the post box since March last year. Mrs Large, who uses a wheelchair, said their weekly

shopping delivery by Centre 81's drivers was the highlight of their week. 'We really rely on them so much. I don't know what we would have done without them,' she said. 'We phone the office on a Wednesday with our shopping list and it usually gets delivered the following day. They're so good.' While staying at home over the past year, Mrs Large kept herself occupied by doing crochet. She said: 'I do things for charity. We also read, we watch the TV a lot, we look at the news a lot. You fill your days with what you need.' When the country first went into lockdown, she thought it wasn't going to last long. 'But as the months went on, you could see it's not going to be just the one lockdown,' she added. 'I'd love to get back out to my clubs. One use to be at a school in Caister, for old people, and the other one was in Scratby, a Thursday morning club. We'd do crafts and have a coffee.' She said that after they have received both doses of the vaccine, they would like to go to Great Yarmouth seafront and sit on a bench, where they could watch the people walk by. The couple, who have two sons, have been married for 56 years. Originally from London, they used to holiday in Hemsby and liked the area so much they moved to the coast. In April last year, Centre 81 launched its shopping and prescription delivery service via its community transport fleet and carries out up to 20 drop-offs a week to vulnerable and shielding people. Diana Staines, chief executive, said: 'It's lovely to get such amazing feedback from members like Mary and Alick, whose lives have been affected dramatically by Covid-19. Many of the people we have supported during this difficult time have expressed their gratitude to Centre 81's staff, who have worked tirelessly to keep in touch with people by phone, even if it's just for a chat.'

<https://www.greatyarmouthmercury.co.uk/news/shield-ding-scratby-couple-praise-centre-81-7904812>



USA - Approach to Consumer Representation & Assurance as Members Sought For Tri-Valley Accessible Advisory Committee Patch.com: "The Livermore Amador Valley Transit Authority (LAVTA), operator of the Wheels Bus system and Dial-A-Ride paratransit service in the Tri-Valley, is seeking applications for members to serve on the Tri-Valley Accessible Advisory Committee (TAAC). Members on the TAAC represent the cities of Livermore, Dublin, and Pleasanton, unincorporated Alameda County and Tri-Valley social/human services agencies...The committee members are expected to provide a forum and advise LAVTA staff on accessibility issues facing senior and disabled residents on LAVTA fixed route buses and Dial-A-Ride paratransit services. The committee meets six times per year for approximately 90 minutes. Currently the committee meetings are being held via Zoom due to Covid-19. TAAC members will receive a free annual LAVTA fixed route bus pass. In addition, ADA paratransit eligible members can ride Dial-A-Ride service to and from TAAC meetings free of charge. Candidates must reside in the city they represent and must be able to solicit and disseminate information effectively to their constituents, be able to meet during regular business hours (typically 3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.), and be able to analyze complex issues and reports to make recommendations regarding LAVTA services. Candidates must currently use LAVTA fixed route buses or Dial-A-Ride paratransit services or represent those who do. Candidates do not have to be disabled or over 65 years old..."

<https://patch.com/california/livermore/members-sought-tri-valley-accessible-advisory-committee>



Community Charity Returns to Provide Vital Transport Services to Vulnerable Residents in Rochford

In Your Area: "A community transport charity, which has delivered food parcels to more than 400 residents during the pandemic, secured funding to get back on the road and provide a vital transport service to vulnerable residents in Rochford, in Essex. Wyvern Community Transport received support with fleet costs from Beech Grove Homes and Sanctuary Housing, including a contribution towards the cost of adapting the minibuses so that they could run safely as soon as restrictions are lifted. Beech Grove Homes provided the charity with £5,000 funding through its MORE! initiative. The MORE! programme sees Beech Grove Homes' development partners work alongside them to add further value to areas where homes are being constructed, by donating skills, resources and equipment to help important local community projects. Sanctuary Housing's Maureen's Gift Fund, which provides grants to run community projects, topped up the donation with an extra £1,000 to support the charity's vital work. Inside the minibuses, most passenger seats have been removed and screens have been installed around the driver and remaining seats so that people can sit at a safe distance from each other. PPE stations with hand sanitiser, facemasks and disposable gloves have also been added. Chris Silvey, Sanctuary's neighbourhood partnerships manager, said: 'We're so pleased to help Wyvern overcome the barriers they have faced and we look forward to seeing people travelling on the minibuses again.' Tracy Chapman, transport manager from Wyvern Community Transport, added: 'The minibus adaptations mean that we will be able to offer Dial a Ride journeys again, which will be compliant with the new mitigation measures required going forward. I would also like to say a big thank you to the 12 volunteers who have helped us to deliver food parcels to residents during these difficult times.' One food parcel recipient said: 'What Wyvern has been doing for months is the kindest, most helpful, supportive and loving thing. I don't know if they all realise how much it has meant to so many of us.' Chairman of Wyvern Community Transport and Rochford

Committee Councillor, June Lumley, said: 'This grant has made a huge difference, enabling Wyvern to be prepared for transporting our vulnerable and isolated residents in Rochford as soon as their community activities, clubs and shops are open to them again.' Rochford District Council's portfolio holder for community, Councillor Mike Webb, added: 'I would like to thank Wyvern Community Transport for the incredible work they have undertaken during the pandemic, delivering food parcels to some of our most vulnerable residents. I would also like to thank Beech Grove Homes for providing funding to assist this great organisation to get back on the road and provide help where it is needed.'" <https://www.inyourarea.co.uk/news/community-charity-returns-to-provide-vital-transport-services-to-vulnerable-residents-in-rochford/>



Ryedale Rovers to Launch in North Yorkshire with £80,000 Bespoke Vehicle in Wake of Lack of Bus Services

Yorkshire Post: "Managers of a community travel organisation operating across Ryedale in North Yorkshire are looking to tailor the service to passengers' needs after many communities in the district have been left without regular bus services. Ryedale Community Transport is set to introduce a pre-booking service for passengers to reserve a seat on its fleet of vehicles, which is serving the 575 square miles of the district. The organisation's spokesman, Ken Gill, said: 'We take over where public transport stops. The moors are a wonderful place to live until you cannot drive and then you realise how difficult living in a rural area can be. We plug that gap.' Some remote villages in Ryedale have hugely limited public

transport linked with only a weekly bus service, creating a void for those needing to attend appointments on other days. However, Ryedale Community Transport has evolved into a major transport provider, operating accessible minibuses and vehicles designed to accommodate wheelchairs. A 'wheels to work' scheme has also been launched which provides scooters for predominantly young people who would otherwise struggle to commute after finding jobs. A new award of £200,000 from the National Lottery will allow the organisation to expand its services over the next five years to provide a network of flexible routes, which will operate under the name of Ryedale Rovers. It is hoped that by developing a service tailored to Ryedale's communities, it will carry enough passengers to operate on its own turnover by the end of the five-year period. The organisation was put under pressure by the coronavirus pandemic which saw income from services provided for other organisations dramatically reduce as lockdown restrictions took hold. Ryedale Community Transport was left with a £60,000 shortfall for the past year, although the deficit has been overcome through successful grant applications. The community transport organisation provides services for about 800 people, using a fleet of 13 vehicles and volunteers' own cars, with an additional 23 mopeds available. The value of the service, which has about 80 volunteers, has been recognised by North Yorkshire County Council, which has awarded three-quarters of the cost of a new bus for the service. The overall cost for the specialist vehicle is more than £80,000, and it is being built to a bespoke low-floor design which is capable of carrying up to four wheelchair users. The county council is supporting the organisation's operations through initiatives such as 'capped' fares, which means passengers facing long trips to hospital will pay no more than £20, with the authority making up the remainder. Sue Allerton, of Malton, is among the users of Ryedale Community Transport and needs assistance with 25-mile journeys for hospital appointments. She is reliant on a wheelchair but does not qualify for NHS patient transport and would be unable to attend appointments, sometimes more than once a week, without the organisation's volunteers. She said: 'They pick me up and are always very helpful. Without them, I

would not be able to get to hospital. I get a great deal out of the service.' Although she has spent a year isolating because of Covid-19, she is also looking forward to the return of social trips to destinations including Whitby and Harrogate. 'They are places I would not have got to otherwise and I really enjoyed the drives out, so I hope they come back after lockdown,' she said. Ryedale is the second most sparsely populated district in England, with just 36 people per square kilometre. Eden in Cumbria is the most sparsely populated district with 25 people per square kilometre.

<https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/politics/ryedale-rovers-to-launch-in-north-yorkshire-with-ps80000-bespoke-vehicle-in-wake-of-lack-of-bus-services-3197009>



Secret Donor Backs Teignbridge Councillor's Minibus Appeal

In Your Area: "Teignbridge Council chairman John Petherick's chosen charity has received a substantial boost to its fundraising efforts from an anonymous donor. Cllr Petherick, along with his wife Cllr Linda Petherick, chose East Teignbridge Community Transport as his charity of the year when he became council chairman last May, with the aim of raising money towards a new minibus. Community Transport need to buy a number of minibuses to replace their current vehicles which are nearing the end of their working life, but lockdown has halted their fundraising efforts over the last year. However, the recent donation has given them sufficient funds to be able to purchase one of their much-needed minibuses. Mr Petherick said: 'We are absolutely delighted that someone has chosen to make such a large donation, and we cannot thank the donor enough. There are some wonderfully generous people out there in the community and in these

strange times Community Transport needs all the support they can get from the community they serve.' The Chairman's Charity is still open until May and any other donations they receive along with the donations they already have will go towards the minibus account. Community Transport chairman Valerie Jeffery added: 'It's such a boost to our valued team of volunteers and staff alike. It will support us to purchase a bespoke multi-purpose vehicle to meet the needs and comforts of all our passengers.'"

<https://www.inyourarea.co.uk/news/secret-donor-backs-teignbridge-councillors-minibus-appeal/>



Future of CT? - Lillium's 7-Seat eVTOL To Debut In 2024 Will Be The Minibus of Air Travel

Intelligent Living: "Lillium's flying taxi is in the class of aircraft known as eVTOL (electric Vertical Take-Off and Landing), but otherwise, it's unlike anything you've ever seen before. It's set apart from other eVTOLs through its design. The German start up redesigned the aircraft from scratch instead of modifying an existing idea. A new announcement from the company states that it's developing a 7-seater version (its first one was a 5-seater), which is more like an air minibus than a flying taxi. It also said it intends to list on Nasdaq through a merger with Qell Acquisition Corp., a company led by Barry Engle, a former president of General Motors North America, providing Lillium with access to industry experience and capital. They plan to launch commercial operations as soon as 2024. The fact that Lillium will have an eVTOL jet that can seat more passengers than its competition sets it up to be a global leader in regional electric air mobility. The aircraft

can also shuttle more goods. Its service for people and cargo will be a sustainable, high-speed transportation option. Daniel Wiegand, Co-Founder and CEO, Lillium: 'Our vision is to create a sustainable and accessible mode of high-speed travel and bring this to every community. Transport infrastructure is broken. It is costly in personal time, space consumption, and carbon emissions. We are pursuing our unique electric jet technology because it is the key to higher-capacity aircraft, with a lower cost per seat mile while delivering low noise and low emissions.' The 7-Seater Lillium Jet is a culmination of five years of technology development across four generations of demonstrators, including its full-scale 5-Seater. Last year, it received a CRI-A01 certification basis from EASA. However, it hasn't received type certification yet to be used as a commercial aircraft. Nevertheless, certification shouldn't be a problem to get, seeing as Lillium has over 400 engineers with a total of 4,000 years of aerospace experience. Its leadership team has been responsible for delivering some of the most complex aircraft in aviation history, such as the Airbus A320, A350 and A380, Gulfstream G650, Eurofighter Typhoon, and Harrier VTOL. Barry Engle, Founder, and CEO, Qell: 'Lillium has unique technology and one of the most accomplished engineering and commercial teams in electric aviation. The 7-Seater Lillium Jet is a game-changer for transportation. I have spent my career in mobility and been part of the electrification of the automotive industry. The market and societal potential from the electrification of air travel are enormous. I, and the whole team at Qell, are excited about the impact Lillium can have and the part we can play.' Lillium could save people hours of life and revolutionize air travel. The 7-Seater Jet has a projected cruise speed of 175 mph (280 km/h) at 10,000 feet and a range of 155 or more miles (250+ km), including reserves. The company has even been laying out the groundwork for vertiports in Florida and across Europe. As many as 14 vertiports are already planned in Florida, with the first to be located in Orlando's Lake Nona region. They hope to expand the network from there across the entire state. Meanwhile, it's in advanced discussions with infrastructure partners in Europe about building a network across the continent."

<https://www.intelligentliving.co/amp/liliums-7-seat-evtol-2024>



Bus Back Better – Rural Lens
 Rural Service Network: "Whilst the RSN has published some initial thoughts on Bus Back Better, which the Government launched early in 2021, it has now had the opportunity to consider the strategy and the attached Rural Lens document sets out some key considerations of the strategy from a rural perspective." See here: <https://rsnonline.org.uk/bus-back-better-rural-lens>



Australia - Dispelling Myths about Bathurst Community Transport

Western Advocate: "Bathurst Community Transport wants people to know its services aren't just for pensioners and people without a driver's licence. CEO Catherine Parnell spoke at the Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association's (CPSA) meeting on Thursday, giving people an insight into the wide-ranging services the organisation offers." Bathurst Community Transport offers transport to aged clients and transport disadvantaged in the Bathurst region,' she said. 'I want to dispel the myth that it's only for pensioners. Transport is available to anyone over the age of 65, they can still be driving around.' Ms Parnell said people can use the service to travel to Sydney if they aren't confident driving on their own, or even as a temporary measure to get around if they are recovering from an injury and can't drive. Drivers can take clients to medical appointments, to the shops and to visit family, with people needing to make bookings in advance. Bathurst Community Transport also arranges social trips every Tuesday, which take people on outings to places within a

100-kilometre radius of Bathurst. 'Since COVID, we've been doing regular small groups, so we could be COVID-safe and still get people out, because one of the most important things is people still get out and maintain their independence,' Ms Parnell said. The trips and other services, including the radiation bus, make a 'massive' difference for people in the community. 'It means people can stay at home longer, it means that people are happier and healthier,' Ms Parnell said. Bathurst Community Transport is also willing to discuss options for people under the age of 65 who are transport disadvantaged..." <https://www.westernadvocate.com.au/story/7192836/dispelling-myths-about-bathurst-community-transport/>



A West Berkshire Volunteer Centre has a New Home after 26 Years

In Your Area: "Volunteer Centre West Berkshire has moved to the top floor of Broadway House in Newbury, Berkshire after 26 years in its office in Bolton Place. The team of volunteers and staff are settling in to their new, brighter, open-plan office, with meetings rooms in the same building for training and events. Garry Poulson, director of the charity for 23 years, said: 'We look forward to many years in our new home and joining a number of other charities too, including Home Start West Berkshire, Citizens Advice West Berkshire, Kennet Radio, Flag DV, Healthwatch and others. Greenham Trust, who own Broadway House, have made us very welcome.'" The voluntary sector support team, Garry Poulson, Jan Ferrer, Sara Hanson and Chris Read, are pleased to continue to offer services for organisations that need support, advice and guidance. The Newbury Community Car Scheme, Newbury and Thatcham Handybus,

which are run by the Volunteer Centre, are also now located at Broadway House. Newbury Shopmobility remains at Northbrook Street multi-storey car park and, following the relaxing of some Covid-19 restrictions, has re-opened."

<https://www.inyourarea.co.uk/news/a-west-berkshire-volunteer-centre-has-a-new-home-after-26-years/>



Council's 'Vulnerable' Residents Vaccination Transport Scheme Hits 500 Journeys

Taxipoint: "Shropshire Council's free transport programme to take 'vulnerable' residents with no access to transport to their COVID-19 vaccination appointments has now passed its 500th vaccination journey. The service launched using the council's own fleet of vehicles, but since then a volunteer fleet of bus and taxi operators have helped out free of charge to ferry people to their appointments. The service is now starting to take many of its initial users back for their second jab, and is expected to continue operating into mid-summer 2021. James Willocks, Shropshire Council's passenger transport manager, said: 'This has been another great example of how the community has come together to help those most in need get to their vaccination appointment, if they have no other way of getting there. Thanks to the support of local bus and taxi operators, we've helped hundreds of people – often among the most vulnerable in the county – who would otherwise have struggled to get to their vaccination locations. I'd like to thank everyone involved for their hard work in helping us protect Shropshire residents.' All vehicles have appropriate ventilation, with strict infection control measures in place, to

ensure they are operated with the highest levels of public health safeguards."

<https://www.taxi-point.co.uk/post/council-s-vulnerable-residents-vaccination-transport-scheme-hits-500-journeys>



Australia - This Community Fought for a Bus, so Why Hasn't it Had a Single Passenger?

ABC: "Residents of Woodstock, a small town in the central west of New South Wales. But oddly, in the six weeks it's been running, the fortnightly service to Cowra has not seen a single passenger.

Christopher Parris is used to driving screaming school kids on a crammed bus around the Cowra region. So it's no wonder the bus driver felt 'lonely' when he drove 36 kilometres to the town of 800 people, only to have no one hop on the bus. 'It's a bit disheartening when you pull up and sit there with the door open, waiting, and no one turns up,' Mr Parris said. He drives the 'Woodstock Wanderer' around town very slowly to make sure people aren't missing the bus, but in the three times the route has run, Mr Parris returned to Cowra alone. 'I know just about every blade of grass from Cowra to Woodstock, and vice versa,' he said. In the fight for the bus, about 75 residents signed a petition that the Cowra Bus Service tabled with the state government. Transport for NSW gave the initiative \$12,000 as part of the Transport Access Regional Partnerships grants program. Mr Parris said there were many local people without access to basic services, so it was confusing why no one was using it. 'The population is ageing and some don't have access to transport to go to the grocery store or doctor, so it's just ideal,' he said. Residents are being warned a review of the route, carried out by Transport for NSW every three months, may see it cancelled within a year. The

Cowra Bus Service said at a minimum, it needed between six to a dozen passengers per fortnight. Alison Rutledge, President of the Woodstock Progress Association, said the need for community transport had been consistently raised at meetings. 'We did the research and we really thought it'd be full,' Ms Rutledge said. The association is concerned that after all these years of work, the service will be stopped once the year-long grant runs out. 'We need to get it used because we don't want to lose it and then in 12 months' time people are crying out for bus services,' she said. For passengers who do plan to use the \$9 return service, it leaves from Woodstock in the morning, drops passengers off at Woolworths and Aldi, the medical centre and main plaza, then returns in the afternoon before school ends."

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-04-14/the-empty-community-bus/100063242>



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