



Community Transport at **TAS**
 The TAS Partnership Limited
 Passenger Transport Specialists

Community & Voluntary Transport Newsletter No.16 January 2022

TAS has provided expert advice, guidance and support for the CT sector for over 30 years. This general newsletter follows from our well-received COVID-19 coverage between April & September 2020. Please let us know of any items that might be of interest to the wider CT sector. Back issues of these newsletters are uploaded on our website:
<https://taspartnership.co.uk/TAS-news/>

Tackling Loneliness through a Transport Fund

Gov.UK: "Public and charity sectors are invited to apply for grants of up to £500,000 to pilot projects that aim to reduce loneliness through transport schemes...The project will offer grant funding to the public and charity sectors to run pilot transport schemes that aim to reduce loneliness. The pilots will be measured and evaluated rigorously, enabling DfT to understand more about how best to 'loneliness-proof' future transport schemes and to share these findings with organisations within and outside government Overall, the project is designed to build the evidence base for the role that transport can play in tackling loneliness by:

-) exploring how transport interventions can help to reduce loneliness and learn lessons about what works, highlighting examples of work being undertaken at a

local level and providing guidance for similar initiatives

-) selecting and funding pilots in partnership with national and local organisations across the public and charity sectors
-) exploring how we might involve the transport network more in trialling new ways of tackling loneliness

The project aims to better understand the role that transport can play in reducing loneliness, with transport as an enabler – the way in which people get to the people and/or places that will make them feel less lonely – and as a social act itself, because public transport is by nature a shared experience. DfT wants to empower our local authorities, third sector organisations and charities to consider the role of transport in tackling loneliness. We welcome applications from umbrella organisations that wish to give funding to local organisations underneath them. Partnerships with the private sector would also be welcomed, but we expect that grants will be awarded to local authorities or third sector organisations and charities..."

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-loneliness-with-transport-fund?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_source=b1f78397-cd56-4a86-843f-dce94248d713&utm_content=daily

We understand that CTA is considering whether a collective bid approach on behalf of its members might result in a more even distribution of funds.



Tackling Loneliness with Transport
 Shared Outcomes Fund Project:
 Expression of Interest Form



DVSA – Find my Nearest Approved Driver CPC Part 3a Test Provider Service Launched
 DVSA: “Today (26 November) we have launched a new find my nearest service where you can find your nearest approved Driver CPC part 3a test provider for the off-road exercise part of the vocational driving test. All Driver CPC 3 tests are being split in to 2 parts from Monday 29 November - part 3a tests (off-road exercises), and part 3b tests (on-road). Drivers must have passed a part 3a test before they can take their 3b test. Splitting HGV and bus driving tests into 2 parts to create 500 more tests a week is part of the government’s 32 actions to tackle the current HGV driver shortage. The new GOV.UK service lists all current approved assessors across Great Britain who can carry out the off-road exercises and have agreed to be on the directory.

It also includes their premise address and contact details, and any accessibility information relating to their premises. All you need to do is provide your postcode to find your nearest provider. The provider can charge up to £40 for this test, but this does not include the cost of any training or vehicle hire.

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKDVSA/bulletins/2fd57>



The Traffic Commissioners have updated their advice issued to assist the transport industry during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

Office of the Traffic Commissioner: “The main changes involve the registration of local bus services and the reinstatement of

advice related to maintenance intervals, as follows:

-) Local bus services operating under a temporary variation can continue doing so until 31 August 2022 (previously 31 March 2022), after which they should revert to their pre-March 2020 position
-) Extension of the process for making temporary service variations using the shortened process until 1 March 2022
-) Advice for operators to liaise with local authorities where local bus services are subject to short term disruption and to effectively publicise affected services to assist the service users
-) Advice on the steps an operator should take when preventative maintenance inspections (PMIs) cannot be conducted within the stated timescale advised to the traffic commissioner. It is the operator’s responsibility to ensure that vehicles are operated safely

Full details can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advice-heavy-goods-and-public-service-vehicle-operators-covid-19>



DVLA launches new campaign to help move customers online
 Gov.Co.UK: “Millions of our customers already use our online services every single month, for example, 98% of all taxed vehicles in the UK are taxed via our digital services. However, we know that lots of customers continue to post their applications to us when they could be using our digital services, so encouraging those customers to go online rather than post their applications is critical to ensure customers can transact with DVLA efficiently.

The campaign promotes 3 key services, with the key message of ‘quick, easy and

secure' to remind customers of the benefits of using our online services:

-) renew at 70
-) renew photocard licence
-) tell DVLA you've bought/sold a vehicle

The campaign launched on 9 November with a press notice highlighting the financial savings customers could have made if they had used DVLA's online services instead of applying by paper. This is one of the many benefits of transacting online, along with the ease, speed and security of our online services being reinforced with our campaign messaging. You may hear or see adverts over the next few months on radio, social media and on search engines. If you do, and you're able to use an online service, give it a go or tell someone who may need to change their vehicle details, renew their photocard driving licence or over 70 driving licence.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/dvla-launches-new-campaign-to-help-move-customers-online>

A Green First for the South West

From TRIP: "A Honiton based Community Charity is becoming the first CT group in the South West to provide 'green' wheelchair accessible transport using its brand new electrically powered specially adapted vehicle. It will be used to take local wheelchair users or those with mobility issues plus their families and carers to local medical and social appointments throughout the area. The vehicle, based on a Nissan ENV200 Evalia, has been converted to be wheelchair accessible at Tiverton based Courtside Conversions- a local firm with over 25 years' experience in these specialist adaptations. This new green machine has only been achieved through funding by local donations, support from local grant-givers and a crowdfunding effort backed and supported by East Devon District Council and Devon County Council. TRIP would like to thank everyone who made this possible.

TRIP manager Neil Hurlock said 'TRIP has always had a reputation for being at the forefront of Community Transport and other service provision and for looking after those who have come to rely on its ability to quickly provide assistance where needed. The acquisition of this EV will play an important role in both reducing the

greenhouse emissions from our vehicles and help to ensure that we can continue to provide low cost easy access transport to people across East Devon who depend on our services.'

TRIP has been serving the East Devon area by providing specially adapted, easy access transport to local people for over 20 years and will be celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2022. The charity provides transport solutions for those with mobility difficulties, mobility equipment, voluntary car transport to medical appointments over a wide area of Devon, aids for daily living and a befriending service as well as information and advice. During the Covid lockdowns of 2020-21 TRIP adapted its services to ensure that people isolating at home were able to get necessary supplies by, with the help of a wonderful group of volunteers, providing a food shopping and home delivery service and also helped, along with other groups, to coordinate the Honiton community response to ensure local residents had the help that was needed.

This Christmas Trip, is, once again, coordinating 'Operation Rudolph' where it and other groups and individuals in Honiton combine to make sure that those who are struggling to cope have a free delivery of Christmas presents or food parcels before the day or can have a hot Christmas meal either delivered or meet up with others at a Honiton venue for a freshly prepared, free of charge, Christmas dinner on the 25th.

For more information please contact Neil Hurlock (Manager) at TRIP via the contact number 01404 46529 or email admin@tripcta.org or check out our website <https://www.tripcta.org/>.



Lottie Joins the Fleet in Dawlish Teignmouth Today: "Dawlish Community Transport has taken delivery of a fleet of new and secondhand vehicles to help residents with mobility issues. The charity now has a brand new bespoke 17-seater minibus, christened Lottie, a second hand 17-seater minibus and two specially adapted cars. The new fleet has been funded thanks to a £50,000 grant from the Lottery plus contributions from individuals after an appeal by the chairman of Teignbridge District Council Cllr John Petherick which led to an anonymous donation. The new bus is fully wheelchair accessible and adapted to transport most abilities, fitted with lowered steps and tail lifts, able to also carry on board mobility scooters and aids to shopping essentials.

The donations came at a time when the charity needed to replace its ageing fleet but while it meant initially having to reduce the vehicles from ten down to five, it now has gone back up to eight. Office manager Sally Preston explained: 'Pre-lockdown we were in a very concerning position with our older fleet of vehicles. But we have been so overwhelmed by the success of a Lottery grant application and with the incredible donations and support from the community to be able to recently purchase replacement vehicles.' She said during lockdown most of the charity's services came to a standstill at first, as did most of the volunteer drivers who were advised to shield, along with all of their fundraising opportunities. Sally said: 'Vehicles are our assets that we cannot be without. The reduced fleet remained a great concern.'

A pre-lockdown small grant application to the Lottery Community Fund came to fruition which purchased a good secondhand wheelchair accessible car in the name of 'Georgie'. Later in the year came 'Bertie' to replace the well-known vehicle Bert – a further grant success from Devon County Council's Invest in Devon. Combined with the existing community raised funds and donations, they bought a converted secondhand replacement 17-seater mini bus.

Sally said: 'The pandemic has taught us many things; most prominent is our understanding of the importance and need

for community transport services to continue. 'When ambulance services were inundated, public transport limited or deemed potentially unsafe for highly vulnerable or unwell people at the time, we were equipped with very versatile vehicles, trained and experienced drivers to go above and beyond their more usual call of duty and support the community to get to essential medical appointments. As services resumed it was noticeable how many were still too concerned to take a seat on a bus, and still are to date, hence less demand for our normal shopping days to increase. Thanks to our amazing team, we've managed to keep the wheels turning and now strive to move forward and continue working together to meet the needs of the community.'

<https://www.teignmouth-today.co.uk/article.cfm?id=121613&headline=Lottie%20joins%20the%20fleet§ionIs=news&searchyear=2021>



£5m Fund Launched to Help Community-minded Organisations Reach Net Zero

The Scotsman: "Social Investment Scotland (SIS), in partnership with Zero Waste Scotland, has unveiled a £5 million fund to help social enterprises and the wider third sector move to carbon net zero. The Social Enterprise Net Zero Transition Fund is described as having been created to support such organisations, including charities and others working in the community, as they transition to carbon neutrality through activities including waste-reduction, energy-consumption, transitioning to sustainable transport options and the adoption of circular economy business models.

The fund will be managed by SIS and will provide loans starting from £10,000, while sums of up to £20,000 may be available, as part of a blended loan and grant offer, to organisations with a particular focus on circular economy projects that deliver new or additional re-use, repair, leasing or sharing activity, resulting in positive carbon

benefits. Additionally, the initiative is part of the Scottish Government's £30 million Third Sector Growth Fund, which was announced in March with the aim of helping make waste-minimisation and reuse the first-choice option for the consumer.

Chris Jamieson, head of investments at SIS said the social enterprise and third sectors 'have a key role to play in ensuring that this transition is fair and just,' because of their ability to deliver social and environmental impact. However, their ambitions are often constrained by the limited resources at their disposal. The Social Enterprise Net Zero Transition Fund will provide finance to support these ambitions, helping Scotland's third sector adopt earth-friendly practices while contributing products and services to address one of society's biggest challenges.'...

Those behind the new fund cited social enterprises and charities in Scotland pursuing a pioneering adoption of circular economy practices and solutions. Among those is Community Transport Glasgow (CTG), a charity that is replacing its entire fleet of diesel minibuses with electric vehicles..."

<https://www.scotsman.com/business/ps5m-fund-launched-to-help-community-minded-organisations-reach-net-zero-3475589>



CT4N Team Visits Preston for TAS Training Session and Visit to Preston Community Transport
Four key members of CT4N Charitable Trust were in Preston recently for a training day around CT marketing. John Atkins and Sarah Huntley of TAS Partnership presented a workshop which

involved Ben Cheshire (Digital Marketing Apprentice), John Shaw (Operations Manager), Elaine Allitt (Charity Co-ordinator) and Richard Hopewell (Assistant Service Delivery Manager). The workshop provided an insight into CT operations (legal framework, strategic value and good practices) and was designed to assist CT4N in its future marketing and development of CT services in the Nottinghamshire area.

The day was rounded off with a visit to Preston Community Transport's Mobility Centre where General Manager Dave Meggison provided insights into the innovative and award-winning Preston CT operation. Elaine Allitt Tweeted: "Really enjoyed our time with @TASPartnership all ready for the upcoming weeks and months...thanks to @TASPartnership for today, and I'm sure our guys are full of fresh ideas and thoughts." Managing Director of CT4N Ian Combellack Tweeted: "Thanks to @TASPartnership and @PrestonCTMob for welcoming the team from @CT4NLive and giving a valuable insight to all things community transport." <https://twitter.com/TASPartnership> and <https://twitter.com/CT4NLive>

CTA Community Transport Advent Calendar

CTA: "Every day from 01 – 25 December, we're going to be opening a door on our #CommunityTransportChristmas advent calendar to give an insight into the wonderful world of community transport!" <https://cta.uk.org/ct-christmas-21/>



Australia: #DoSomethingGood – for You, but also Your Community!

News of the Area: "With 35 years' experience, The Community Transport

Company and our team of dedicated drivers are at the ready to get you where you need to be, when you need to be there! CEO Bethany Langford understands the transition between working life and retirement can be a little difficult to navigate and may leave people feeling isolated. 'But rest assured, we're here to help you stay connected, get you where you need to be and out and about accessing your community. A professional, safe, reliable service offering accessible vehicles with highly trained drivers that always go that extra step to ensure their passengers receive the best of care and arrive on time! There's something for everyone, whether it be our door to door service for appointments, our shopping buses, or even just jumping aboard our social buses to enjoy some good company.

We are a registered charity with 100% of our profits reinvested back into the community. That means, for every dollar you spend with us, we give back \$14 of value back to the community – a fantastic return on investment! So, #DoSomethingGood, jump aboard today and join in the fun! For further information on available services, please call our office on 1300 812 504 or visit our website www.communitytransport.net.au."

<https://www.newsofthearea.com.au/dosomethinggood-for-you-but-also-your-community-80675>



Harbury e-Wheels

HarburyEnergy.Co.UK: "Harbury e-Wheels provides transport to those in need using 2 electric cars supplied by Electric Zoo, working within a 15-mile radius of Harbury. We do this at no cost to the beneficiary or the agency that refers them. Our aim is to reduce rural isolation and enable local agencies to deliver their

services effectively. This combines social benefit with environmental benefit. We need to fund raise over £15,000 a year to keep Harbury e-Wheels rolling. We are grateful for the support for the charity from individuals, businesses and groups, many of whom commit a small regular annual sum. Please consider donating:

<https://www.harburyenergy.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Standing-Order-Oct-2021.pdf> We are staffed entirely by 24 volunteers (coordinators, drivers, board members) and we work with local social agencies: Surgeries and hospitals, Children's Centres, Citizens Advice, AgeUK, Churches, Local Councils, etc.

We accept referrals of families and individuals who are prevented from reaching important, sometimes vital appointments for financial or physical reasons. All this we do using non-polluting electric vehicles. We also take food donated by Harbury residents from All Saints church to the Food Bank at Kineton. For others we provide rare opportunities to socialise at community organised events such as the church run Meeting Point, Connections (dementia) Café and Holiday at Home. Our overheads are very small but we do have to pay for the hire, insurance and care of the cars. Our transport needs, in our opinion, to be free and this has so far been possible because of fundraising events, small donations and grants." See video here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-76f7D_mbCM&t=3s
<http://www.harburyenergy.co.uk/harbury-e-wheels/>



Loneliness for Adults with Learning Disabilities not Limited to Lockdown According to new Research by HfT

HfT: "Experiences of loneliness were not limited to Covid lockdown for people with learning disabilities, according to a newly

published report by Hft, a national charity supporting adults with learning disabilities. Over a third (36%) of people with a learning disability surveyed after lockdown said they felt lonely nearly always or all the time, while one in three people (37%) also said that they hardly ever or never go out to socialise – suggesting that their experiences of loneliness were not simply a consequence of restrictions introduced due to the pandemic. For many, feeling disconnected was a longstanding experience, with a third (33%) of those surveyed saying they did not feel part of their local community and almost half also saying the pandemic has exacerbated their feeling of loneliness...

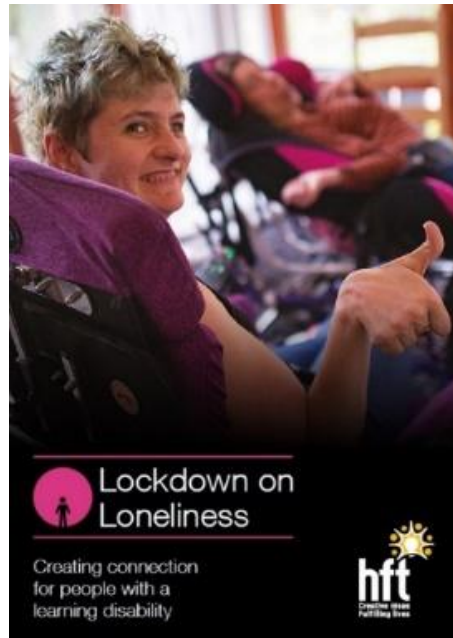
The report entitled, "Lockdown on Loneliness", highlights unmet support needs as a key driver of loneliness which prevents many people with a learning disability from taking opportunities to socialise. Almost a quarter of people (24%) surveyed said they did not have enough support to go out into their community, while two thirds (66%) said they would like more support to do social activities and make friends – highlighting the vital role social care plays in supporting people with a learning disability to participate in every day social activities.

Public attitude also played an integral part in increasing people's feelings of loneliness. One in three people (33%) said they were not confident making friends, with almost four in ten (38%) stating they were worried that people will not understand their disability. More than a third (39%) were concerned that people would be unkind. Based on the findings of the report, Hft has now made a series of recommendations to Government to influence change and will be raising awareness of the issue through their Lockdown on Loneliness campaign.

Victoria Hemmingway, Policy and Public Affairs Manager for Hft said: 'One of the consequences of the last 18 months, is that the unique set of circumstances created by the Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in a common experience of loneliness. Restrictions to our everyday life, through lockdowns, shielding and isolation, has meant everyone, to some extent, has experienced feeling more disconnected

from family, friends and support networks. But for many people with a learning disability, loneliness hasn't been restricted to the pandemic; it is a chronic and long-term experience. By identifying the drivers of loneliness and taking action to combat these barriers we have the opportunity to make positive change as we rebuild our communities, ensuring that no one with a learning disability spends a lifetime feeling like they are still in lockdown. Hft's vision is for a world in which people with a learning disability can live the best life possible. This must include having equal opportunity to make and maintain friendships and be part of a community.'

<https://www.hft.org.uk/blog/loneliness-and-isolation-among-adults-with-learning-disabilities-2/>



Boston Community Transport wishes to Recruit New Trustees BCT: "Boston Community Transport are a small charity who provide an essential transport alternative to vulnerable, socially isolated and elderly members of the Borough of Boston. Board meetings are held every 2 months. The Board are responsible for overseeing the operation of the Charity and give guidance to the Office Manager and her staff. We are keen to recruit members of the local community to input their skills, experience and knowledge to develop our Charity further. For more information, please contact Angela Gould, Office Manager: tel 01205 360183 or email

office@bostonct.org.uk or take a look at our website www.bostonct.org.uk."



TRUSTEES WANTED

We need you!

- Board meetings are held every 2 months.
- The Board are responsible for overseeing the operation of the Charity and give guidance to the Office Manager and her staff.
- We are keen to recruit members of the local community to input their skills, experience and knowledge to develop our Charity further.

Boston Community Transport are a small charity who provide an essential transport alternative to vulnerable, socially isolated and elderly members of the Borough of Boston.

For more information, please contact Angela Gould, Office Manager:
tel 01205 560183 or email office@bostonct.org.uk
or take a look at our website www.bostonct.org.uk

Covid-19 Services Earn Award for Reading Transport Company
The Reading Chronicle: "Reading transport service Readibus has won the award for the best pandemic provisions in England at the Community Transport Awards 2021. Judged on its actions during the difficult 18 months of the Covid pandemic, it was runner-up in the UK-wide award, but victorious in the England category. Readibus have been providing transport services to the people of Reading, and surrounding areas, for more than 40 years. Throughout the pandemic, the Readibus service has provided a safe means for elderly, disabled and clinically vulnerable people to make essential journeys, whether this has been for food shopping, medical appointments, respite or any other reason. Readibus has also worked alongside the South-Central Ambulance Service to enable local people to safely get to non-Covid-related hospital appointments, such as for cancer treatment and dialysis. Nearly 60,000 safe essential journeys have been made on Readibus since the start of the first lockdown,

including over 2,000 journeys during the first lockdown in 2020. As well as giving people the means to make the essential journeys safely, the Readibus team also made hundreds of calls to people who were on their own to check they were OK.

Chief Executive of the Community Transport Association, Bill Freeman, offered his 'huge congratulations for the incredible work over the last year and a half.' General Manager of Readibus, Peter Absolon, said: 'I am delighted that our team have received this recognition at the CT Awards. There are hundreds and hundreds of community transport service providers in the four nations of the UK, all doing wonderful work, and for the Readibus team to be recognised in this way for service provided during such a challenging time as this pandemic is quite something. Readibus staff showed great commitment to keep the service available and to ensure that it was safe, especially during the first lockdown. I am so proud of what we did and what we achieved together.'

Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport at Reading Borough Council, Cllr Tony Page, added: 'This is another well-deserved national accolade for Reading's Readibus service which provides a lifeline for so many people. The value of Readibus has particularly come to the fore throughout the health emergency and my huge congratulations go to everyone at Readibus.'

<https://www.readingchronicle.co.uk/news/19768122.covid-19-services-earn-award-reading-transport-company/>



North Herts Transport Service Calls for Volunteers to Help End Loneliness this Winter

InYourArea: "The North Hertfordshire and Stevenage Community Transport service, a Hertfordshire-based service dedicated to providing transport for people who need to access health and social appointments, has issued an urgent call for volunteers ahead of World Volunteers Day which takes place on Sunday, December 5. Since spring 2020, loneliness has increased by 5 per cent, with around 2.6 million adults reporting they often or always felt lonely.

With loneliness considered to be a major factor affecting people's mental health during the Covid-19 pandemic, lack of transport to access hospital appointments and social engagements has been a source of unhappiness for many and is set to worsen this winter. Age UK has found that half a million older people go at least five or six days a week without seeing or speaking to anyone at all and recent research has revealed that people experiencing loneliness and social isolation face a greater risk of developing cognitive decline and dementia.

The North Herts and Stevenage Community Transport service is calling for volunteer drivers to join their team and by giving a bit of time, provide essential transport to people in need. As of December 2021:

-) 3,629 completed bookings
-) 3,508 clients used the service, of which 2,738 were health-related and 885 social-related
-) 82,300 miles driven by volunteer drivers this year

Jon Brown, community transport manager, said: 'It is an unhappy fact that when half a million people go almost a week without seeing or speaking to another person, that is a social problem that can have far-reaching consequences. We have 61 volunteer drivers but the demand for our service is increasing. More people need help, which is why I urge anyone who has a vehicle, enjoys driving and helping people, and who can offer a morning, a day, or even longer to volunteer. It's such a flexible and rewarding role. You could really make a

difference to someone's life and help a person stave off loneliness.'

Volunteer driver Ramesh Baxani, said, 'I find the job extremely rewarding and gratifying when I hear elderly, lonely or disabled people say how grateful they are for this volunteer service. It's a good opportunity for them to have social interaction, talk to someone and enjoy an outing. I see a cross-section of society with varying ages, needs and disabilities and I feel honoured to be working with this charitable organisation and contributing to a noble cause.' The volunteer service is accepting donations online <https://www.goldengiving.com/secure/donation/nhcvs> to help keep their vital service sustainable and moving forward. Any persons interested in becoming a volunteer driver should call: 01462 689402, or email: transport@nhcvs.org.uk to register and book an appointment." <https://www.inyourarea.co.uk/news/north-herts-transport-service-calls-for-volunteers-to-help-end-loneliness-this-winter/>



Mayor Joins Passengers for a Hoppa Ride

Farnham Herald: "The Mayor of Farnham, Councillor Alan Earwaker, has received an insight into why so many people describe the Waverley Hoppa Community Transport service as a 'lifeline'. The mayor accompanied driver Steve Dudley as he picked up passengers from Brightwells Goostrey Centre and dropped them off at their homes. Farnham Town Council provides an annual grant of £10,000 towards the provision of the Hoppa service in Farnham. Similarly, Haslemere Town Council agreed to renew its £5,000 annual revenue grant in September for services provided to Haslemere residents. This money goes towards providing door-to-

door transport for people who have no other means of getting around. During the ride, the mayor heard how the layout of the passenger cabin can be easily adapted to accommodate wheelchairs, mobility aids and shopping trolleys.

Speaking afterwards, Cllr Earwaker said: 'The versatility of the bus makes the service highly flexible and suitable for people with restricted mobility. I was very impressed by the friendliness of the service and the sense of community among the passengers. It must be so reassuring to Hoppa passengers to know their driver will provide assistance if needed and always see them safely to their front door.' As well as taking people to and from Brightwells, passengers can book to be taken anywhere in the Farnham area.

Steve Forward, general manager at Hoppa, added: 'Hoppa covers nearly 30 villages and neighbourhoods in the Farnham area, which provides people with the opportunity to enjoy a great deal of freedom and independence. Passengers can book for us to take them to a friend's house in rural Frensham, shopping at a local supermarket, a browse round a garden centre, a check-up at the doctors, and anything else they would like to do in the Farnham area.' Anybody who has a valid bus pass can travel for free on Hoppa after 9.30am. To use the service, passengers need to register, which is quick and easy to do. Visit the website www.hoppa.org.uk or call 01428 681701 for a registration form." <https://www.farnhamherald.com/article.cfm?id=141333&headline=Mayor%20joins%20passengers%20for%20a%20hoppa%20ride§ionIs=news&searchyear=2021>



Memorial Installed at Broadstairs College in Memory of Much-loved Former Staff Member

The Isle of Thanet News: "A memorial has been installed at Broadstairs College, honouring a much-loved leader who worked there for 19 years. The family of Bertie Armstrong visited the EKC Group site on December 13, to see the flower-filled boat named in his memory. Mr Armstrong passed away in June at the age of 73, having had a large impact on the future of the college and Thanet's education. Bertie started to work at Broadstairs College in 1988 and retired in 2007, during which he became the first head of Student Services where he managed Careers, Admissions and Student Finance. He founded Broadstairs College's original Nursery – then called Smarties – and 'Guidelines', an outreach initiative. Bertie also created a strong partnership with Thanet Community Transport – a unique service providing our supported learning students with transport to college. The minibus service became more than just a lift to college, the fun and friendships made on the bus each morning became an important part of the student's day.

Bertie also led the College on government initiatives such as Aim Higher, Lifelong Learning, the Educational Maintenance Allowance and the Adult Learning Grant. Val Beckingham, team leader of the college's current Support Services staff, said: 'Bertie will be remembered as a manager who worked hard and believed in his staff, always looking for opportunities for them to progress. He was calm, approachable and a strong leader, with a great sense of humour and soft Northern Ireland accent. He will be greatly missed.' Regarding the memorial, placed near the Welcome Building, Val added: 'It's fantastic that students and staff, as well as Bertie's family, have something they can remember him by, especially something so eye-catching. Bertie was a big part of the Broadstairs College community and I'm sure he would have been very proud to have been honoured with a permanent memorial on the campus.'"

<https://theisleofthanetnews.com/2021/12/14/memorial-installed-at-broadstairs-college-in-memory-of-much-loved-former-staff-member/>



Praise for “Exceptional Staff and Services” at Award-winning Local Charity

Wrexham.com: “The “exceptional staff and services” of an award-winning local charity have been praised by the MP for Clwyd South. The Rainbow Foundation has been promoting good mental health and wellbeing whilst successfully tackling loneliness and isolation for the past 27 years. Their mission is to help older people to regain their sense of worth and to provide access to support, services and facilities that can empower people of all ages to retain as much independence as possible.

Some of the services offered by the charity include the award-winning Day Opportunities Services (sometimes referred to as daycare), Home Care, Community Transport, Social Prescribing at GP surgeries across Wrexham and a range of groups and services supporting people to deal with issues such as mental health, bereavement, caring responsibilities and the menopause.

Simon Baynes MP recently visited The Rainbow Foundation’s Centre in Penley and praised both the staff and services at the organisation on their exceptional work. Mr Baynes was also able to see first hand some of the services offered, including the Community Art Class, before visiting the Day Opportunities service where service users were creating their own poppies for Remembrance Day 2021.

He was also able to thank the staff for their dedication and commitment to assisting the elderly and vulnerable, particularly continuing support throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Caroline Tudor-James,

chief officer at The Rainbow Foundation, said: ‘We appreciated Simon coming to see us, which provided an opportunity for us to discuss how we are responding to the social care crisis across Wrexham. During the pandemic, we supported over 2,000 people through our day opportunities and community wellbeing services – helping people with direct care, mental health support, supplies, meals and prescriptions...

Commenting after the visit, Simon Baynes MP said: ‘It was a privilege to meet with both staff and service users of Penley Rainbow Centre to see for myself the exceptional work they carry out. I was extremely impressed to see and hear how The Rainbow Foundation is able to benefit our local communities by the range of services they offer and how they supported clients throughout the pandemic. During my visit, I was able to see the benefits of groups such as the Community Art Class and the way the day opportunities service was able to benefit the health and well-being of our more elderly community, particularly after COVID-19 and the negative impacts this had on mental health and well-being. For a lot of people, these services are a great way to meet with others and are a life-line to remain living independently, so I would like to take the opportunity to thank The Rainbow Foundation for what they offer the local area...”

<https://www.wrexham.com/news/praise-for-exceptional-staff-and-services-at-award-winning-local-charity-212408.html>

also...

Wrexham Charity Boosted by New Minibus from Steve Morgan Foundation

Leader Live: “An award-winning Wrexham charity has been donated with a new minibus from the Steve Morgan Foundation. The Rainbow Foundation, which has hubs in Penley, Marchwiel and Chirk, has been promoting good mental health and wellbeing whilst successfully tackling loneliness and isolation. Its mission is to help older people to regain their sense of worth and to provide access to support, services and facilities that can empower people of all ages to retain as much independence as possible. The Steve

Morgan Foundation has now delivered 89 'Smiley Buses' since launching in 2001. Rainbow Foundation CEO, Caroline Tudor-James, said community transport is a lifeline to many people, especially to the older elderly living across rural communities of Wrexham. She said: 'We are delighted with the addition of a new bus to our community transport fleet thanks to the Steve Morgan Foundation. Having this bus will allow us to expand our transport service across our three care and wellbeing hubs in Penley, Marchwiel and Chirk, which is opening this January. We are also incredibly grateful for the support from the Steve Morgan Foundation at the very start of the pandemic which meant we could stay open and support thousands of people in need during lockdown.'

Caroline added: 'Lockdown was hard for many of us, but the reality is that for many elderly people who live in our local communities, every day is like lockdown, even now months after regulations eased. This is why community transport is so important to The Rainbow Foundation and our clients as we work to connect people with much-needed services in our areas in the fight against loneliness and isolation whilst promoting active ageing.'

Philanthropist Steve Morgan CBE, owner of Redrow Homes, said: 'I have great affection for Penley because it's the location of Redrow's first ever job. Knowing the area well, I understand how the lack of transport can leave vulnerable people, especially the elderly, feeling completely isolated. Having visited The Rainbow Foundation previously, I continue to be impressed by the good work they do. We're delighted to provide a new Smiley bus and know it will make a big difference to lots of people.'

The Rainbow Foundation has recently launched its 'Festive Fundraiser' where prizes include a Fender guitar signed by all 4 members of Coldplay, a luxury Christmas hamper, a 5* weekend away in London and a Peloton bike. Tickets can be purchased via

www.justgiving.com/campaign/TheRainbowFoundationFestiveFundraiser."

<https://www.leaderlive.co.uk/news/19773385-wrexham-charity-boosted-new-minibus-steve-morgan-foundation/>



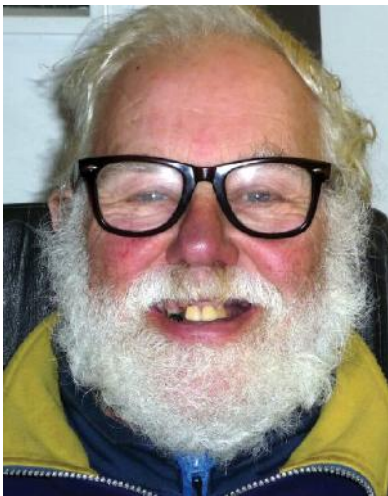
Lifetime Award for Modest Community Driver Eric

Mid-Devon Advertiser: "The longest serving driver with Dawlish Community Transport has retired after nearly 30 years of service. Modest Eric Smallridge was presented with a special commendation at the National Community Transport awards. Volunteer Eric, who has been involved with the charity since its early days, received the award as part of the Lifetime Achievement category.

DCT spokesman Sally Preston said: 'Eric has always said to me he volunteered because he wanted to, not to get any awards or medals. Over the years he has met some lovely people and has very fond memories.' Eric began volunteering in 1993 as a driver, having taken a work break, and has been on board ever since. The citation read: 'So fully committed, involved and driving for us sometimes seven days per week, with "no" rarely being a word in his vocabulary. From driving minibuses to our cars, he has without a doubt clearly been a lifeline for so many. And to us, not only a driver, but the eyes and ears of our community; keeping a check on all those he knows and feeding back to us any concerns.'

During lockdown Eric, who is in his 70s, very reluctantly had to take a step back as it was insisted he safeguard himself. He returned for a period when the pandemic restrictions eased until one day he found himself unwell and not able to drive. The citation continued: 'We are so very shocked and obviously saddened, and it is heart-breaking to say.' Over the years he has served hundreds of people. Eric rarely leaves his home town, refuses to have a mobile phone or any form of technology. Sally said: 'Eric has given back as much in return with his very dry sense of humour, yet such an endearing, kind and gentle man. Going that extra mile does not apply to Eric; he will go miles and more. He is so very highly valued and respected, a wonderfully dedicated and fundamental person he has been to our charity, Eric said he just enjoys every moment of what he does. What better testimonial for a wonderful, kind, selfless and generous man who has always been ready to give his time to benefit others, a true advocate of the sector of community transport volunteering.' Sally added Eric would be irreplaceable."

<https://www.middevonadvertiser.co.uk/article.cfm?id=121688&headline=Life%20time%20award%20for%20modest%20%20community%20driver%20Eric§ionIs=news&searchyear=2021>



MP Visits Swaffham Christmas Lunch

Lynn News: "Foreign Secretary and South West Norfolk MP Elizabeth Truss popped in to Swaffham Lions' annual seniors Christmas lunch. After a four-year gap, the Lions were able to return to the Nicholas Hamond Academy to host the festive meal.

The kitchen staff gave their time free of charge to cook a three-course Christmas meal with food donated by Tesco and served by members of the Lions and Lions branch club. The 70 guests, from Swaffham and surrounding villages, were collected by buses supplied by Hamond's and Swaffham Community Transport and were entertained after the meal with bingo and traditional Christmas songs."

<https://www.lynnnews.co.uk/news/cabinet-minister-pops-in-for-lunch-9229790/>



South Antrim Community Transport Receives New Electric Bus

4ni.co.uk: "Infrastructure Minister Nichola Mallon has visited South Antrim Community Transport to welcome the delivery of their new electric bus, which has been purchased through her department's Blue/Green Fund. South Antrim are one of 13 Community Transport operators who will receive a new electric bus as part of an overall capital investment of £1.36million. Their vehicle is the first to be operational and it is anticipated that the remaining buses will enter service by March 2022. Minister Mallon said: 'I recognise the important contribution that community transport makes in complementing the wider public transport network, helping connect communities and ensuring that some of the most vulnerable people in our society are able to access essential local services and more actively participate in society. I also want to acknowledge the role that Community Transport Operators have played during the pandemic. In the initial COVID response, they transitioned their services from passenger transport to delivery of food, groceries and medicines. As the vaccines were rolled out they also ensured that many people without access to transport were able to get to their Covid Vaccination appointments.'

Continuing, Minister Mallon said: 'I was delighted to visit South Antrim Community Transport to hear about the work they do within their local community and to celebrate the arrival of their new electric bus which will help them to continue to provide those vital services. I am committed to delivering cleaner, greener, sustainable infrastructure. This £1.36m pilot project to provide 13 electric vehicles aims to reduce carbon emissions, increase community awareness of zero emission vehicles and allow us to evaluate the use of electric vehicles in the context of community transport. These are the changes we need to see to help us tackle the climate crisis and contribute to better health outcomes for all our population. I will continue to make positive steps to support cleaner, greener travel.'

<https://www.4ni.co.uk/northern-ireland-news/281270/other-news-in-brief>



Henry Arnold Named Everyday Hero in Lancashire Telegraph Community Awards

Lancashire Telegraph: "Today we announce the winner of the Everyday Hero category in the Lancashire Telegraph Community Heroes Awards 2021 - kindly sponsored by Blackburn with Darwen Council. We asked you to nominate people who had stepped up during the Covid pandemic and shown amazing courage and selflessness to help others. We had lots of entries and the winners will be announced in the days in the run-up to a celebration supplement in the Lancashire Telegraph on December 16 featuring all of those successful. And the winner of the Everyday Hero award — sponsored by Bryan Lee Building Contractors Ltd — is Henry Arnold. He certainly impressed the judges and it's easy to see why. Mr Arnold, the owner of not-for-profit Blackburn with Darwen Community Transport, didn't sit back and hide away as the pandemic raged on outside, he got to work with finding out what he could do for his community.

He said: 'It struck me how heavy a burden the virus was going to place on everyone in the town and surrounding areas. We have 35 vehicles and all the normal type of work with schools and our disabled customers came to a stop and I was left with this resource and thinking "let's put it to the needs of the community".' Soon Mr Arnold had teamed up with the likes of Benefit Mankind (winner of the Community Champion award), Nigel Evans MP, Calypso Restaurant (winner of the Business of the Year award), Blackburn with Darwen Council, Carol Davies from the Clifton pub (highly commended in this category) and many others to put his fleet to use. From delivering food parcels to those most in need to supporting the local East Lancashire Hospitals Trust by transporting patients to and from hospital, there wasn't much Mr Arnold and his crew didn't get involved in. He added: 'I see this award as being for all of us at Blackburn with Darwen Community Transport — me and the 40 or so I have working for me — this is a tribute to them too.'

The operation also continued through sickness as Mr Arnold himself was diagnosed with Covid-19 and then later, tragedy, as his father contracted and sadly died from the virus. The person who nominated Mr Arnold said: 'Throughout the Covid crisis Henry had put his vehicles and drivers to the benefit of the whole community. I am sure he is a deserving recipient of this award.' Carol Davis from the Clifton pub in Blackburn has been highly commended in this category for her invaluable work during the pandemic."

<https://www.lancashiretelegraph.co.uk/news/1976700/2.henry-arnold-named-everyday-hero-lancashire-telegraph-community-awards/>



Appeal to Help Dee Valley Community Group Land Prestigious Award

Denbighshire Free Press: "A Denbighshire social enterprise is in the running for a major award after boosting the economy of the south of the county by over £4 million in just three years. South Denbighshire Community Partnership (SDCP) has been short-listed in the prestigious Steve Morgan Foundation Awards for its pioneering work in the Dee Valley area, including Llangollen, in fighting rural poverty and isolation. Their services were extended to the Llangollen area in January after they won a £500,000 Lottery bonanza to fight rural poverty in the Dee Valley with the cash to be spread over four years to autumn 2024. Now they are appealing for local supporters to vote for them in the Awards which cover North Wales, Merseyside and Cheshire, in the over £250,000 category for Charities and Social Enterprises making the Most Local Impact.

In the past three years SDCP, a grant-funded community charity with its headquarters at Canolfan Ni in Corwen, has helped local people claim unpaid benefits, introduced community transport along the Dee Valley, run a meals-on-wheels service and even pioneered a hydro-electric power scheme. SDCP Chief Officer Margaret Sutherland said: 'We're thrilled to have been short-listed for this major award and for a small organisation here in the Dee Valley to be named alongside major charities and organisations from across Liverpool and Cheshire. We feel it is recognition for the work we and the people of Corwen and the Dee Valley have done to make life better for the local community and in particular for those suffering from poverty and loneliness. Now we'd just like to appeal to our many supporters to help by voting for us at <https://stevemorganfoundation.org.uk/> by the end of the year as those votes will count towards 20 per cent of the final decision.'

SDCP also receives funding support from other sources including Betsi Cadwaladar Health Board, Morrison's, Moondance, Community Foundation Wales and

Cadwyn Clwyd, while continuing to work closely with Denbighshire County Council on joint Community Development and Community Transport schemes. Their rural transport services include bus trips on their 16-seater community minibus.

The Partnership serves Corwen and the surrounding villages of Glyndyfrdwy, Carrog, Cynwyd, Llandrillo, Gwyddelwern, Betws Gwerfil Goch, Melin Y Wig and Bryneglwys, an area covering 100 square miles and this year extended its activities down the A5 to Llangollen. Community Engagement Officer Sally Lloyd Davies said: 'This is an area where there is a great deal of rural poverty with older people often living in isolated areas and in the pandemic it has been a very frightening time for them. At the height of the pandemic we have been a vital link for many isolated people, bringing them shopping and prescriptions, making regular buddy phone calls for a chat and just being a friendly face dropping in.' For the latest information on SDCP go to

<https://www.facebook.com/sdcppartnership> and for those in need of support contact SDCP on 01490 266004."

<https://www.denbighshirefreepress.co.uk/news/19783583.appeal-help-dee-valley-community-group-land-prestigious-award/>



Call for More Volunteers on Visit to Community Transport in Goole

East Riding Council: "A call for more volunteers for community transport groups in the East Riding has been made on a visit

to Goole. Cllr David Elvidge, portfolio holder for community involvement and community sector at East Riding of Yorkshire Council, made the appeal after meeting members of the Goole GoFar team. Goole GoFar operates two Medibus services for patients and visitors, one servicing Goole and Scunthorpe hospitals under contract to the council and another funded by a successful National Lottery bid that services Hull and Castle Hill hospitals. But like all community transport teams, Goole GoFar always needs more drivers, and the pandemic has had a big impact on the number of volunteers it has.

Cllr Elvidge joined members of the council's transportation team on the visit, travelling in the council's new electric-powered minibus. They met with Goole GoFar business manager Christine Dales and development coordinator Andy Jackson. Cllr Elvidge said: 'It was great to meet Christine and Andy, members of Goole GoFar. They were extremely interested in the zero emissions minibus we travelled in. Community transport in such a rural authority is vital for our residents and providers. Like Goole GoFar, they work with the council in many ways including the Medibus service, offering essential support when it's most needed. They are, however, like other community groups - short of volunteer drivers. I would implore anyone with a licence and spare time to think about giving their time to help others. It brings its own reward.'

<https://www.eastriding.gov.uk/say/news/?entry=61b9b111a4b0e24c1832180c>



Christmas and New Year
Community Bus Changes
Bridport News: "Bridport's community
bus, Service 7, will see a change this week

to assist with Christmas shopping, followed by wider timetable revisions in January. The round-town bus, which normally runs on Wednesdays and Saturdays to give shoppers easy access to Bridport Market, will operate on Friday (Christmas Eve) this week to coincide with the rescheduled market on that day. The service will then be paused for the Christmas and New Year period, resuming with a new timetable and expanded route from January 5, 2022. A review of the service, run by Dorset Community Transport on behalf of Bridport Town Council, identified an opportunity to incorporate Chestnut Road, Valley Road and Coopers Drive into the route from January – a change requested by Bothenhampton & Walditch Parish Council and the Western Area Transport Action Group (WATAG). The changes also mean that the bus will serve South Street, meaning that all three major shopping streets will be covered.

Town Clerk Will Austin said 'It's a challenging time for public transport and the town council is pleased to be extending the route at a time when we hear a lot about bus services reducing in Dorset. I'm particularly pleased that with the help of Dorset Community Transport we can now reach Coopers Drive – residents have asked for this and our previous operator wasn't able to incorporate it.' The revised timetable from January 5 2022 is available from Bridport Tourist Information Centre, and online at <https://www.bridport-tc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Bridport-Service-7-From-5-January-2022.pdf>.
<https://www.bridportnews.co.uk/news/19795881.christmas-new-year-community-bus-changes/>



Covid-19: Torbay in 'Dire Need' of Volunteers

BBC: "An appeal has been launched for volunteer drivers to take people to their booster vaccinations in Devon. Torbay Community Development Trust said there was a 'dire need' for Covid-19 volunteers in Torbay. The trust is also calling for more volunteer marshals to help with the booster vaccination rollout. Kelly Bedoyan, a community transport co-ordinator for the trust, said there was a shortage of volunteers at the moment. 'We had a huge amount of people coming forward last year to help with volunteering with lots of different things, but they've gone back to work or circumstances have changed,' she told BBC Radio Devon. 'We're just looking to get more volunteers because we've got a shortage at the moment.' The trust said it was also in need of vaccination marshals at the Riviera Centre in Torquay and call handlers for Torbay Community Helpline over Christmas. The UK government has said it hopes every adult will be able to book a Covid booster before the end of 2021." <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-devon-59673752>



Just the ticket: Free transport to attend council exercise classes
 Redditch Standard: "Vulnerable and elderly residents can travel further for free and be able to access more activities to help keep them fit thanks to public health funding. Redditch Borough Council has been successful in bidding for additional funding from Worcestershire Public Health, made available to help those most impacted by Covid, to support the transport of people to council-run community exercise sessions helping the lonely, elderly, disabled and vulnerable. Residents who are eligible for community transport,

usually those who are unable to access public transport easily due to disability or older age, can now use the transport for free in order to attend council-run community exercise classes designed to improve mobility, prevent falls, and help vulnerable people stay independent in their homes.

The extra funding will cover the cost usually charged for this service (or alternatively the registration set up fee) and will be available until the end of March. All transport will need to be pre-booked and uses volunteer driven cars and multi-purpose vehicles. Note that council-run community exercise classes have now finished and will reopen again in the New Year. More details about start dates are available on the council's website, search for 'community classes'. To find out more about how to book free transport or learn more about the community classes available near you go to www.redditchbc.gov.uk. Alternatively, call the council to discuss your needs on 01527 881404. The funding is only eligible for use by participants attending the council's community classes and cannot be used for other exercise sessions or other journeys, for instance, like shopping.

Redditch Borough Council Leader, Councillor Matt Dormer, said: 'We have a wide variety of community classes on offer which are specially designed to help our residents stay independent and healthy, but transport can be tricky if you're reliant on family or friends to take you or can't afford the taxi fare. This funding from Public Health could make a significant difference to our lonely, elderly, disabled and vulnerable residents in Redditch.' To deliver the service, the council will be working alongside local transport partners Dial a Ride and others. The council are also asking any local taxi drivers who are interested in supporting the scheme in outlying areas, where traditional community transport is not as readily available. Interested? Contact Hayley Gwilliam on 01527 881404 or email Hayley.Gwilliam@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk." <https://redditchstandard.co.uk/news/just-the-ticket-free-transport-to-attend-council-exercise-classes/>



TAS

If you require any advice or support please contact us on 01772-204988 or email

john.atkins@taspartnership.com