



**Community
Transport at**

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The TAS Partnership Limited
Passenger Transport Specialists

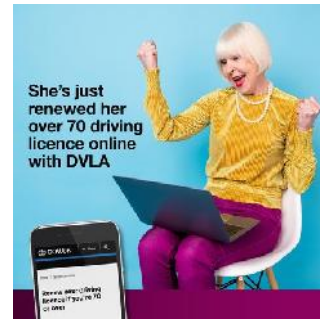
Community & Voluntary Transport Newsletter No.17 February 2022

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://taspартnership.co.uk/TAS-news/>

DVLA Digital Services - How to Renew your Driving Licence Online if you're 70 or Over

DVLA: "If you're 70 or over and need to renew your driving licence, the easiest and quickest way is online." TAS notes: from age 70 drivers can renew electronically without charge BUT will lose the D1 entitlement, including D1 (101) status. To keep that status drivers have to renew by post and pay for a medical. Which begs the questions: Do CTs offer to pay the medicals for their older volunteer drivers? And what do insurance companies say?

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKDVLA/buletins/305aca7>



Scotland's Plugged-In Communities Fund – What Next? CTA: "Decarbonising community transport will be a key challenge for our sector in the years ahead, as well as a major opportunity to help us deliver a more sustainable transport system across Scotland. Financial support will be critical to help CTA members to transition from petrol and diesel to electric or even hydrogen vehicles. CTA was therefore pleased by the launch of the Plugged-In Communities Grant Fund earlier this year to support community transport operators to procure zero-emission vehicles. Many of our members applied during the 2021/22 pilot round – funded by Transport Scotland and administered by the Energy Saving Trust – and a number were successful.

After listening to your experiences of applying, whether successful or unsuccessful, we have written to Transport Scotland and the Energy Saving Trust to share constructive feedback which can help inform decisions about whether and how funding is designed and delivered in the future.

Our letter – which you can download and read in full here <https://ctauk.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Plugged-In-Communities-Grant-Fund-Letter-from-CTA.pdf> – makes the following key points:

- J Community transport operators will need further financial support to meet the significant up-front capital costs of Electric Vehicles (EVs). Higher levels of interest and the large number of applications makes a strong case for further rounds of funding in 2022/23 and beyond;
- J There were positive innovations in the application process. Members valued being able to submit multiple

- preferences and speak to a 'real person' at online advice sessions;
-) More flexible application criteria could have better tailored the Fund to the distinct characteristics of our sector and the people and communities we serve;
 -) There is currently a limited supply of Electric Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (eWAVs) which meet the needs of our sector in terms of accessibility and mileage. It is likely that EV manufacturers will take time to develop and produce models which meet the distinct needs of our niche market;
 -) A lack of charging points or enabling grid infrastructure is discouraging many operators from transitioning confidently to EVs;
 -) Smaller operators often face issues with lack of space or landlord permission for storage of EVs or installation of charging points;
 -) Requirements to spend all of the funding within the same financial year was challenging given delays with manufacturers and supply chains

We are now engaging with the Energy Saving Trust and Transport Scotland to take this forward. We have met with them recently to discuss your feedback and our ideas. We look forward to working with our partners and members to deliver a just transition to net zero for community transport and for Scotland. What did you think of the Plugged-In Communities Grant Fund? What kind of support will you need in the future to decarbonise your operations? Let me know via david.kelly@ctauk.org. Have you transitioned your fleet to Electric Vehicles? Are you innovating with e-bikes or thinking about hydrogen? Share your sustainability case study via scotland@ctauk.org. "<https://ctauk.org/scotlands-plugged-in-communities-fund-what-next/>



Also from CTA in Scotland...

Tackling Inequality in Partnership with Transport Scotland

CTA: "Equality is at the heart of the ethos of Community Transport. But we know that there are still far too many inequalities across Scotland's transport system which cause disadvantage, exclusion and unfairness – from transport poverty in deprived, island or rural communities to inaccessible services experienced by older and disabled people. So how can we tackle these inequalities? What action does government need to take? And what is the role of the Community Transport sector? Transport Scotland has undertaken seven impact assessments to evaluate how it expects the policies in its Delivery Plan for the National Transport Strategy 2 (NTS2) to impact on equality. In early January, it closed a consultation seeking comments from stakeholders and the public.

CTA's response – which you can download <https://ctauk.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/NTS2-Delivery-Plan-Impact-Assessments-CTA-RESPONSE-FINAL.pdf> – scrutinises the Delivery Plan's key policies in three of the relevant impact assessments and in doing so calls on Transport Scotland to:

-) Restore confidence in public and Community Transport to promote a safe return to sustainable travel;
-) Consider additional financial support which may be required by the Community Transport sector as Scotland recovers from COVID-19;
-) Work in partnership with local authorities, health boards and Community Transport operators to better support transport to health and tackle health inequalities;
-) Build on the Plugged-In Communities Grant Fund to help the sector transition to zero-emission vehicles and deliver a just transition;
-) Explore eligibility for full reimbursement under the National Concessionary Travel Scheme and the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel Scheme for operators with Section 19 permits;
-) Ensure clarity, consistency and fairness in the Blue Badge Scheme for

- Community Transport operators and passengers across Scotland and
-) Work more closely with Community Transport operators in rural and island communities to tackle transport inequalities.

CTA is already working closely with partners at Transport Scotland to advance equality within, and through, transport. Over the past few months, we've discussed COVID-19, Blue Badges and transport to health with Transport Scotland's Bus and Accessible Travel teams, as well as with Scottish Government colleagues responsible for Health & Social Care. We hope to deepen these partnerships and develop new relationships across government and with other key stakeholders this year... What do you think of our response? How should CTA work with Transport Scotland going forward? Let me know via david.kelly@ctauk.org." <https://ctauk.org/tackling-inequality-in-partnership-with-transport-scotland/>



Free Community Transport Offer to Help Those in Need in South Yorks Get Covid Jobs

Doncaster Free Press: "Free Community Transport journeys are being offered to vaccination sites in South Yorkshire to support the region's Covid-19 booster drive. The dedicated Door-2-Door services aim to help people who find it difficult to get out to get a jab. Director of Public Transport Operations at South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA), Tim Taylor, said: 'We believe that everyone has the right to travel and access facilities and opportunities in South Yorkshire. No one should miss the chance to have a Covid-19 vaccine or booster because they can't get to their appointment or vaccination site. "Community Transport provides a vital service for people who find

it difficult or impossible to use public transport. We are providing free return journeys to remove travel barriers for those people, to help them get a job and to help South Yorkshire's vaccination effort.'

Passengers can register to use Community Transport services with their local provider in Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham or Sheffield. Services use fully accessible vehicles and can collect passengers directly from their homes. To book a free ride to and from a vaccination site with Door-2-Door services in South Yorkshire, call:

-) Barnsley Dial-a-Ride on 01226 732096
-) Doncaster Community Transport on- 01302 342400
-) Rotherham Community Transport on 01709 517100
-) Sheffield Community Transport on 0114 285 9906

Journeys operate on a first-come, first-served basis and must be booked in advance. Community Transport services are funded through SYMCA..."

<https://www.doncasterfreepress.co.uk/health/coronavirus/free-community-transport-offer-to-help-those-in-need-in-doncaster-get-covid-jabs-3513424>



Ambitious 'Lochalsh Loves Local' Project set to Launch

West Highland Free Press: "An ambitious new project will be launched in Lochalsh shortly aimed at encouraging people to buy locally and travel sustainably. Kyle and Lochalsh Community Trust has secured funding to buy an electric minibus which will play a central part in the new project – Lochalsh Loves Local. The project will promote sustainable travel by foot, cycle

and minibus and urge shoppers to buy locally in Lochalsh.

The trust has secured £20,000 for the project from Scotland Loves Local, a Scottish Government initiative aimed at invigorating high streets and supporting local businesses which have lost trade during the Covid-19 pandemic. Kyle and Lochalsh Community Trust has also been able to purchase a new nine-seater electric minibus with additional funding of £40,000. The need for better local transport links and better cycle and foot links between settlements, as well as the need to support businesses, were all identified as key priorities in the recent Lochalsh community survey which was conducted in 2021.

Kyle and Lochalsh Community Trust subsequently devised a project which incorporated all of those priorities. A large number of residents responded to the community survey which gave the trust firm evidence of local backing to put before potential funders. The trust is now recruiting for a Lochalsh Loves Local co-ordinator on a three-day a week role for an initial year, working alongside the trust's community development officer, Susan Walker.

The co-ordinator will work with local businesses to develop promotional campaigns and special events and 'Lochalsh Loves Local' days to encourage local purchasing. The co-ordinator's role will also involve consulting with the community and local groups to identify the best way to use and schedule the new minibus. This might include designing some scheduled routes and perhaps a dial-a-taxi or rental model to make sure the community gets the best use out of the new community transport vehicle.

The project will also be looking for some volunteer drivers to help to deliver the new community transport scheme. In addition, Lochalsh Loves Local will identify and promote existing path and cycle routes between settlements, as well as researching potential new foot and cycle routes.

The project hopes to work with partners to produce a plan for a new paths network that links as many settlements as possible

in Lochalsh. Extra funding will be needed to develop any new paths identified.

Maggie Byrne, chairwoman of Kyle and Lochalsh Community Trust said: 'Transport within Lochalsh has been raised as a serious issue that prevents community members from getting to work, accessing childcare, travelling to the shops or medical appointments, attending social or sporting activities or events, connecting up with the public transport network or being able to travel safely by foot or cycle between settlements.'

The local community also values our local businesses highly and was very grateful for the extra community support they gave during Covid lockdowns. We are delighted to be able to begin to address these crucial community priorities with our new Lochalsh Loves Local project.'

For more information on the Lochalsh Loves Local co-ordinator's post, please visit the Kyle and Lochalsh Community Trust website <https://www.lochalsh.uk/>. "<https://www.whfp.com/2022/01/21/28841/>



Community Transport Group Raises Fares

Tavistock Times Gazette: "Okehampton and District Community Transport Group will be raising the fare for a return bus journey by £1 in January due to financial pressures. Rates will rise from £3 to £4 for a return journey within Okehampton, £4 to £5 for a trip to the surrounding Okehampton area and £5 to £6 for a longer trip. Sue Wonnacott, manager of Okehampton and District Community Transport Group, said: 'We haven't raised our prices in years and our numbers [of customers] are starting to

creep up again [following covid lockdowns], but when it costs £100 to fill up for a trip for one person it is not economically viable.' The transport group is also struggling to find enough drivers and have had to turn down requests due to a lack of driver availability. Covid has only exacerbated the problem as drivers left during lockdowns and have not returned.

Ms Wonnacott said: 'At the moment, we have to turn down requests from groups most of the time. We are happy to pay someone and still we are struggling. We want to offer [our customers] more choice. Anyone can drive, all you need is a D1 on your licence.'

Okehampton and District Community Transport Group offers a specialised door-to-door bus service in the Okehampton area for those living in remote areas or with limited mobility. The service will also take people to and from healthcare appointments."

<http://www.calstock-today.co.uk/article.cfm?id=440667&headline=Community%20transport%20group%20raises%20fares§ion=news&searchyear=2021>



New year to Bring Electric Community Transport to Tenbury

Ludlow Advertiser: "The New Year is expected to see one of the first electric vehicle projects in the country move into gear in Tenbury. Early in 2020 the Teme Wheels group was formed with the mission of being a pioneer in bringing electric powered community transport to rural areas. The project required £20,000 of funding to be achieved from the local community and with grants. This was required in order for a matched funding grant to be available for the project that costs £40,000.

An extension was needed to give people in the area the chance to secure the necessary funds but this was achieved at the end of the summer. A vehicle with

wheelchair access was needed and there was a concern that it would be hard to get because of production problems linked to a shortage of computer chips for cars. However, a vehicle was found and is expected to be in use in Tenbury during the early part of 2022."

<https://www.ludlowadvertiser.co.uk/news/19810585.new-year-set-bring-electric-community-transport-tenbury/>



Little White Bus at Ribbleshead Viaduct

Little White Bus of Wensleydale is supported by Ingrid Flute Yorkshire Holiday Cottages and recently took part in photocall to promote this fact at the iconic Ribbleshead Viaduct.

<https://www.facebook.com/LittleWhiteBus>



Council Gets Knuckles Rapped and Told to Apologise

Newbury Today: "West Berkshire Council has been told to apologise and compensate a community bus charity for failing to carry out a public consultation on cutting its budget. The council leader has also been singled out in the Local Government Ombudsman's findings for publishing a video giving the expectation that a public consultation would be carried out. The complaint was brought by a 'Mr X' – no names are published in the reports.

He claimed the cut in funding meant 'Charity A' significantly reduced its service to its clients, which impacted on the lives of people with restricted mobility in the district. The Local Government Ombudsman's report said: 'In relation to the public consultation I am satisfied the council's consultation policy and the video published on the council's website by the council leader gave the expectation that a public consultation would happen. Therefore the council was at fault for failing to carry out a public consultation.'

The council was unable to confirm why it decided against carrying out a public consultation at the time as the individuals who made this decision had left the council and not recorded the decision. This was also found to be at fault. The council's consultation policy says everyone affected by decisions should have the opportunity to have their views heard.

It carried out a review of its service provision when setting its budget in 2019/2020. Part of this was to reduce costs for its community transport provision. The council's budget for community transport grants was £90,000 and it sought to reduce this by £35,000 to £55,000 per year. It aimed to re-model the community transport operator grant budgets to achieve this saving. At this time, the council published a video on its website from the council leader about the budget proposals for 2019/2020. The council leader said: 'We are currently consulting on some budget proposals for next year which will impact on frontline services. Before we make our decisions we want to understand what impact they would have on the people who use those services and how that impact might be mitigated.'

The council later said it would be more suitable for the service providers to contact their clients and include customer feedback in their consultation responses, however it did not provide enough time for service providers to consult with their clients. In response to Charity A's complaint and enquiries made by the Ombudsman, the council said it felt service users may not be able to engage with a public consultation process as many of them had learning disabilities.

'If this was the council's reason for not carrying out a public consultation this is concerning as many of Charity A's clients have mobility issues and not learning disabilities,' said the report. 'In addition, a public consultation could have engaged with the families and carers of those with learning disabilities and to exclude them from this process on the basis they may not understand the process is fault.

I cannot say on balance whether carrying out a public consultation for the cuts to community transport grants would have changed the council's view. This is because we do not know what the public consultation would have said nor how councillors or officers would have reacted following the results from a public consultation. However, based on the evidence Mr X provided, it does lead to uncertainty about what would have happened had the council carried out a public consultation.' West Berkshire Council has agreed to apologise to Charity A for not carrying out a public consultation on the proposed cuts and pay £300 in recognition of the uncertainty caused."

<https://www.newburytoday.co.uk/news/council-at-fault-over-community-bus-budget-cuts-9232858/>

See also:

<https://www.getreading.co.uk/news/reading-berkshire-news/west-berkshire-council-ordered-apologise-22621774>



Government Teams-up with Charity Scope on Disabled Persons Passenger Charter
 DfT: "The government has joined with disability charity Scope to develop a new Disabled Persons Passenger Charter for bus, coach, taxi, private hire vehicle and rail. Providing a clear explanation of their rights, the charter will improve journeys for disabled people by helping ensure they can

travel easily and more confidently. It will bring together a host of information for disabled passengers travelling across England and advice for passengers on what to do when things do not go as expected.

The charter follows last year's unveiling of the government's National Disability Strategy – a range of initiatives to improve journeys for disabled people including:

-) an accessibility audit of all rail stations;
-) clearer audible and visual announcements on buses;
-) introducing legislation for taxis and private hire vehicles in Parliament and
-) £1 million to improve access at seaports.

Wendy Morton, Accessibility Minister, said: 'I am delighted that we will be partnering with Scope to develop a charter for disabled passengers that will help boost confidence across our road and rail network. This practical guide will pull together disabled passengers' rights so they understand how they can get from A to B with the dignity and ease they deserve'.

Scope research suggests that passengers who travel frequently are faced with a multitude of documents about their rights, which can be unclear. Acting on this feedback, the charter will collate existing information for passengers and centralise it into one coherent and easy-to-use format.

Once developed, it will be published online, providing a one-stop shop on passenger rights and complaints procedures. Mark Hodgkinson, Scope Chief Executive, said: 'We are delighted to work with the Department for Transport to develop a Passenger Charter. Thousands of Scope supporters have backed calls for this vital step towards transforming a system that sometimes makes travel unnecessarily hard, if not impossible, if you are disabled. Public transport should be accessible for everyone and this charter will help disabled passengers better understand their rights, the standards they should expect across the network and how to hold providers to account when travel goes wrong.'

As part of our pledge to build back fairer, the government has today (10 January

2022) also updated its Use of tactile paving surfaces and Guide to best practice on access to pedestrian and transport infrastructure.

The guidance has been amended following research and stakeholder engagement to include the latest standards. It will support the building of accessible pedestrian and transport infrastructure while making sure that public spaces are open to all. This government is committed to making our transport network more inclusive and to making travel easier for disabled people. Today we are also publishing the first evaluation report of progress against our Inclusive Transport Strategy.

Incorporating evidence from disabled people on their transport experiences, this report will help shape future changes and build a fairer system for everyone."

https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-teams-with-charity-scope-on-disabled-persons-passenger-charter?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications-topic&utm_source=32dd3612-9239-4ded-9b2d-3e47f7d447fd&utm_content=daily



Councillor Ben Cooper Supports Friends of the X112 with grant
Nwemail: "Low Furness District Councillor Ben Cooper has allocated a £500 grant to help support the Friends of the X112 community transport group. District councillors across South Lakeland each have a member's allowance of £1,000 per year to help support local charities, community projects, and good causes in their areas. After talking with residents and the group's founders in recent weeks, Cllr Cooper has awarded a £500 grant to help the Friends of X112 to continue running their community bus services along the

Coast Road. And he is now appealing for residents' views on where they think the remaining £500 grant should be spent.

'There are so many fantastic charities and community projects doing great things across Low Furness,' he said. 'The Friends of X112 group are doing amazing work in running their own community bus services and helping to keep our communities connected. Councillors are elected to champion people's priorities, so I want to hear from residents on where they think the next £500 grant should be awarded. This is a great chance for people to get in touch and really shape the future of our villages and communities with this funding.'

Applications for this grant funding will close at the end of February. Residents can have their say and contact Cllr Cooper via email at Ben.Cooper@southlakeland.gov.uk

The importance of community transport was raised by numerous people at the Furness MP Simon Fell's summer surgery tour in July. 'Many local people raised the importance of supporting community transport, like the Friends of X112 group, and helping make sure we keep our rural communities connected,' said Mr Fell. 'It's great that Cllr Cooper has been able to provide this funding to keep the buses moving. To ensure the sustainable future of the community run bus service, I joined my neighbour, the MP for Westmorland and Lonsdale, in writing to Cumbria County Council, calling on them to permit the group to use the Bus Service Operators grant to fund the service, so that more rural communities in Furness can continue to be connected.'

<https://www.nwemail.co.uk/news/19828927.councillor-ben-cooper-supports-friends-x112-grant/>



Nidderdale Shop to Aid Transport Scheme

Harrogate Advertiser: "This week saw the launch of donations to a new charity shop in Pateley Bridge which will support community services. Nidderdale Plus said that there had been a positive reaction with people arriving with items to stock the former Save the Children site in High Street, which will benefit vital facilities, including its Community Transport system.

Helen Flynn, Executive Director, said: 'People seem to recognise the benefits of the shop to the community. The Transport service has been running for over seven years now and is in constant use. We have a community car provided by North Yorks County Council and driven by volunteer drivers, and increasingly we have volunteers using their own cars to help transport local residents. This really is an essential service for Nidderdale and we are so grateful for our wonderful team of volunteer drivers. The service could not exist and be affordable for people without them.

Funding things like the insurance, fuel and maintenance costs, as well as the admin support, is always a challenge, so funds from our new charity shop will make a big difference.' The service ensures that people who have no private transport and cannot access public transport can get to essential appointments and daily needs, such as hospital, optician and doctor appointments and shopping and hairdressing needs.

Sandra Walker coordinates all the bookings and looks after all the volunteers from the Hub. She added: 'Increasingly we are finding that people needing to use the service have a greater level of need, so the care and time that volunteers need to give to passengers is particularly appreciated. She added: "Increasingly we are finding that people needing to use the service have a greater level of need, so the care and time that volunteers need to give to passengers is particularly appreciated. This is a service that vulnerable and elderly people, in particular, in Nidderdale need.' New volunteers drivers are always welcomed, and anyone interested should contact Sandra at 01423 714953 or at admin@nidderdaleplus.org.uk.

Anyone with donations of items to stock the shop, which will open mid-February, can drop them off on - Saturday 29, 10am-2pm; Tuesday February 1, 10am-2pm; Saturday 5, 10am-2pm.

Wanted items include clothes, bric-a-brac and books."

<https://www.harrogateadvertiser.co.uk/news/people/nidderdale-shop-to-aid-transport-scheme-3532463>



Bill Freeman and Rachel Burr to Leave CTA

CTA: Alan B Jones (Chair of Trustees) writes: "After eight and a half years as our Chief Executive, Bill Freeman is moving to a new role with another national charity towards the end of March. We'll be sorry to see Bill go, but he leaves behind a good legacy and foundation for the next Chief Executive to build on. We have strong finances, great talent across all members of the team and new faces on the board bringing fresh perspectives and ideas about doing more with and for our members. Throughout the pandemic community transport has proved, once again, its vital role in solving big issues facing our communities and the legacy of this should be more opportunities to be part of addressing the challenges of the future. All this adds up to making the job of being our next Chief Executive an exciting prospect.

We will be starting the process of recruiting our next Chief Executive shortly with the aim of having selected them before Bill leaves for pastures new. Our Chief Executive provides leadership to the whole movement, as well as CTA as an organisation, so we will be having a rigorous process for finding the right person who can perform both these facets of the

role to a high standard. It's the Board's responsibility to lead this recruitment and you as members will be well represented in this process by the five trustees who are drawn from the membership. I'm sure you'll all join me in wishing Bill well in his new role and I look forward to sharing more details about the recruitment process with you once these have been finalised."

<https://ctauk.org/note-to-members-from-alan-b-jones-chair-of-trustees/>

Gemma Lelliott (new Director for Wales) writes: "As many of you know, I stepped up to cover the Director for Wales post on an interim basis last summer while Rachel Burr has been on maternity leave. Over the last six months I have been following the path she laid out for us and the roadmap our members helped us to create, driving forward our policy and public affairs work alongside our operational and development projects with enormous support from Michelle, Emma and David in Wales and the whole CTA team across the UK. I'm really pleased to say we have taken some big steps forward with so much of this work, securing new funding, influencing key decision makers, and continuing to build relationships which we hope will lead to even more opportunities to grow Wales' accessible and inclusive transport network.

As we approach the planned end to my secondment, Rachel has announced she is moving on to a different post within the third sector in Wales, having secured a really exciting opportunity as Wales Director for Diabetes UK. We wish her all the best in this next chapter and I know she will continue to be an advocate and champion for the community transport sector. Which leads to my exciting news! I am thrilled to announce that I have been asked to stay on as Director for Wales on a permanent basis, which as you can imagine I gracefully (fizzing over with excitement!) accepted. I love this job. I love working at CTA with this incredible team, and finding ways to deliver the right support in the right places to groups and organisations who are doing their best for their communities. I am very proud that Bill and the board of trustees have placed their trust in me and feel that I have the right skills, experience and attitude to continue

to work alongside operators, partners, and stakeholders to deliver a transport system in Wales that truly works for everyone.”
<https://cta.uk.org/exciting-times-ahead-for-cta-in-wales/>



...And Noeleen Lynch and Nicola Mitchell join CTA
<https://twitter.com/CTAUK1>



Halton Community Transport New Video

Now on YouTube and very impressive it looks and sounds too (with a little help from Neil Diamond)!
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OCEVOp0N3LM&t=7s>



January Changes to Statutory Documents

Office of the Traffic Commissioner: “The following changes have been made to the Senior Traffic Commissioner’s Statutory Documents this month. They are:

- J Updated link to new PSVAR exemption letter (document 1, para 23)
- J Refer to UT decision on obligation to revoke a licence when a period of grace expires (document 2, par 26 and document 3, para 31)
- J Link to OTC Guide to Making Representations, Objections and Complaints (document 4, para 3)
- J Link to HMRC guidance on short-term driver engagements (document 5, para 38)
- J Updated rehabilitation legal references (document 6, para 112)
- J Refer to UT decisions on the definition of procedural requirements for the purposes of section 36, the applicability of consent orders and stay provisions in respect of interim licences (document 12, paras 4, 8 and 15)

The Senior Traffic Commissioner’s statutory guidance and statutory directions can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/senior-traffic-commissioners-statutory-guidance-and-statutory-directions>
<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKOTC/bulletins/306636e>



**Traffic Commissioners
for Great Britain**

Arsonists Destroy Charity Minibus that was a 'Lifeline' for Some of Newcastle's Most Vulnerable

ChronicleLive: "Charity workers were left 'devastated' after heartless arsonists destroyed a minibus they use to help some of the North East's most vulnerable people. Based out of St Margaret's Church in Newcastle's West End, Changing Lives' GAP/MAP project is an outreach service helping those at risk of being sexually exploited or who are involved in sex work. On Monday, project workers discovered their minibus had been gutted by fire, putting some of their crucial work at risk. Project manager Luisa Alvarez said: 'We, as an organisation, are devastated that the bus has been targeted and burnt to the ground for no reason.' The bus was purchased 13 years ago after a donation by Brunswick Church. Since then, staff say, it's been in use 'daily', helping them to provide vital support to vulnerable people all across the Northumbria Police force area.

Luisa said: 'The minibus is used for extensive purposes including facilitating outreach sessions where the team reach out to the most vulnerable people in our communities. This also includes providing people with essential items and offering support to ensure they are safe. The bus is also used for day trips to the beach, retreat centres, country walks which create positive experiences and memories for people who are experiencing hardship. The bus played a key role in ensuring the people we support are included in various activities, more recently our annual Christmas gathering. We have previously supported people who are fleeing abuse to relocate to a place of safety which has included moving their belongings.'

Without the bus, the Changing Lives workers are worried about how many key aspects of their work will continue. Luisa added: 'The bus has been our lifeline for the day-to-day running of our service. We are passionate about the support we offer, giving people the chance to live a life worth living, free from harm, and the bus enabled us to reach out to some of the cities' darkest corners. Our team will no longer be able to conduct outreach, provide transport,

daily activities. This will have a huge impact on the daily running of our service.'

Although an insurance policy covers the bus, because of its age it's unlikely the payment will cover the full cost of a replacement, leaving the charity needing to fundraise to ensure the project stays mobile. Police were called out to the scene of the destruction, on Heighley Street, and have asked anyone with information to come forward. A spokesperson for Northumbria Police said: 'Police received a report of a burned out mini bus on Heighley Street, Newcastle on Monday, January 17'." <https://www.chroniclelive.co.uk/news/north-east-news/arsonists-destroy-charity-minibus-lifeline-22829399#source=push>



Calls for Combined Authority to Stump up Extra Cash to Keep Vital Wisbech Bus Service Running

Fenland Citizen: "The future of a vital town bus service is currently hanging in the balance with discussions on how it can be kept running due to held next week. Fenland district and county councillors together with the office of MP Steve Barclay have appealed to Cambridgeshire's Mayor Dr Nik Johnson to look into potentially offering an extension to the temporary funding already being made available by the Combined Authority. The move follows an appeal by a regular user of the Wisbech 68 Tesco bus service, who feared an end to the service would cut her independence as well as damage business for those firms along Cromwell Road, where the bus runs.

The bus user initially wrote to Councillor Sam Hoy asking for her assistance and then followed it up with a request to Mr Barclay's office. Gary Christy, chair of Fenland Association for Community Transport (FACT), which operates the service has explained its funding history and said that originally it was funded by

Section 106 money - cash paid by developers for local services - through Fenland District council and Cambridgeshire County Council.

He said: 'This service has been running for many years against a set allocation of funding and is operated under a Section 22 licence as a not-for-profit public service. The original funding was due to be fully used up by around August 2020 but with some changes to the route, plus fares received and other cost savings, it was possible to extend it to November 2021.'

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) then agreed to fund the service up to the end of March 2022. The concept of the using the Section 106 money was to prove the patronage of the Route 68. FACT has provided monthly statistics to both FDC and CPCA showing numbers of passengers. 'I have been told that the Route 68 funding will cease at the end of March and we have lobbied and campaigned for the service to continue, be it either by an extension of the Section 22 arrangements or it be put out for commercial tender. I do have a meeting with FDC and CPCA on Monday January 31 to understand what the future of the Route 68 is, but on the last meeting we had with them the news was not very encouraging. We would of course like to see the continuation of the Route 68 in any form, and are more than willing to continue to operate it under Section 22 not-for-profit, just as we have done very successfully for many years – it would be a great shame for the public to lose this valuable service.' Fenland council leader Councillor Chris Boden has now written to Mayor Dr Johnson asking him if there is anything that can be done in the short-term. Cllr Boden, who is also a trustee of FACT, said: 'I'm aware of course of the ambitious plans that the CPCA is considering to improve bus services in the Combined Authority area, especially serving those areas with the greatest need'."

<https://www.fenlandcitizen.co.uk/news/calls-for-combined-authority-to-stump-up-extra-cash-to-keep-9236746/>



New Management of North Salop Wheelers Seeking Volunteers

Whitchurch Herald: "A community bus service for north Shropshire has issued an appeal for volunteers. The new management of the North Salop (NS) Wheelers Community Bus Project are looking for new faces following the retirement of its founders, John Harrison and Phoebe Ashton.

Under the new management, NS Wheelers want to offer regular bus services to Whitchurch, Market Drayton and Wem for those who have no other means of transport. Additionally, NS Wheelers want to offer lifts to appointments and meetings, transport for community groups and door-to-door transport. The Whixall based non-profit organisation said they are looking for volunteer drivers and people who can help with logistics, accounts and administration.

A spokesperson said: 'No special qualifications are needed. If you can spare some time to assist travel to markets or for such things as vaccinations, doctor, hospital, optician appointments, please contact us. For example, we need a driver on Tuesdays to take one adult by car from Wem to Fordhall Farm at 9.15am and return at 3pm, a total time commitment of two hours. Our passengers regard the service as a life-line as they have no other means of transport to access shopping and medical facilities.' NS Wheelers has served the community since 2003. Those who would like to volunteer can call or leave a message on 07597 273959 or email WheelersCBP@gmail.com."

<https://www.whitchurchherald.co.uk/news/19864456.new-management-north-salop-wheelers-seeking-volunteers/>



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