



**Community  
Transport at**



## Community & Voluntary Transport Newsletter No.18 March 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/>

### Highway Code Changes

Gov.uk: "Rules for all types of road users have been updated in The Highway Code to improve the safety of people walking, cycling and riding horses. The changes follow a public consultation on a review of The Highway Code to improve road safety for people walking, cycling and riding horses. It ran from July to October 2020, and received more than 20,000 responses from the public, businesses and other organisations. Most people who responded were in favour of all the changes. The changes were made to The Highway Code on Saturday 29 January 2022. Here are 8 of the changes that you need to know about.

1. Hierarchy of road users. The hierarchy places those road users most at risk in the event of a collision at the top of the hierarchy. It does not remove the need for everyone to behave responsibly...
2. People crossing the road at junctions. The updated code clarifies that:

- J when people are crossing or waiting to cross at a junction, other traffic should give way
- J if people have started crossing and traffic wants to turn into the road, the people crossing have priority and the traffic should give way
- J people driving, riding a motorcycle or cycling must give way to people on a zebra crossing and people walking and cycling on a parallel crossing...

3. Walking, cycling or riding in shared spaces...People cycling, riding a horse or driving a horse-drawn vehicle should respect the safety of people walking in these spaces, but people walking should also take care not to obstruct or endanger them...

4. Positioning in the road when cycling. There is updated guidance for people cycling about positioning themselves which includes:

- J riding in the centre of their lane on quiet roads, in slower-moving traffic and at the approach to junctions or road narrowings
- J keeping at least 0.5 metres (just over 1.5 feet) away from the kerb edge (and further where it is safer) when riding on busy roads with vehicles moving faster than them...

5. Overtaking when driving or cycling. You may cross a double-white line if necessary (provided the road is clear) to overtake someone cycling or riding a horse if they are travelling at 10 mph or less...There is updated guidance on safe passing distances and speeds for people driving or riding a motorcycle when overtaking vulnerable road users...

6. People cycling at junctions. The code has been updated to clarify that when turning into or out of a side road, people cycling should give way to people walking who are crossing or waiting to cross. There is new advice about new special cycle facilities at some junctions...

7. People cycling, riding a horse and driving horse-drawn vehicles on roundabouts. The code has been updated to clarify that people driving or riding a motorcycle should give priority to people cycling on roundabouts. The new guidance will say people driving and or riding a motorcycle should:

- J not attempt to overtake people cycling within that person's lane

) allow people cycling to move across their path as they travel around the roundabout...

8. Parking, charging and leaving vehicles. The code recommends a new technique when leaving vehicles. It's sometimes called the 'Dutch Reach'. Where people driving or passengers in a vehicle are able to do so, they should open the door using their hand on the opposite side to the door they are opening...Using an electric vehicle charge point for the first time, the code includes guidance about using electric vehicle charging points..."

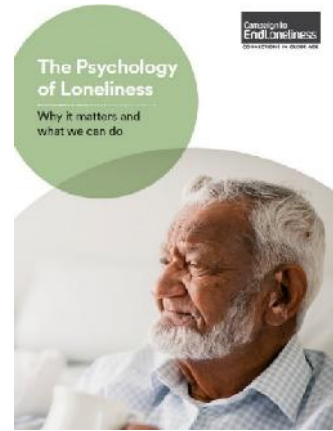
[https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-highway-code-8-changes-you-need-to-know-from-29-january-2022?utm\\_source=dvsa&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=dvsa-direct](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-highway-code-8-changes-you-need-to-know-from-29-january-2022?utm_source=dvsa&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=dvsa-direct)



### Tackling Loneliness with Transport Fund: Next Steps

Gov.UK: "The Department for Transport (DfT) will assess the expressions of interest received and shortlist pilots to progress to a pilot design stage. The pilot design stage will take place in March 2022, during which time DfT will work closely with shortlisted organisations. Following the pilot design stage, DfT will select the final grant awardees and release funds. We expect pilot operation to begin in April 2022. Applicants who go through to the pilot design stage will need to show why their proposal demonstrates good value for money and is affordable. DfT will also look for details noting expected project management of the scheme and governance. The pilot design stage will also need to consider risks to delivery." We know from DfT's tender specification for the evaluation process that they expect to fund only 10 pilots.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-loneliness-with-transport-fund/tackling-loneliness-with-transport-fund-guidance-for-applicants>



### Tackling Loneliness Annual Report (February 2022): The Third Year - Helping People to Connect through Transport Initiatives

Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport – has published this report which reiterates the Government's strategy commitments and reports on progress.

"The government will: build partnerships to explore how transport can be used to tackle loneliness. As part of its £5.8 million Shared Outcomes Fund project on Transport and Loneliness, the Department for Transport (DfT) will work with local authorities and charities to develop proposals for trials that will use transport interventions to help reduce loneliness. These trials will be evaluated by academics working in conjunction with DfT and their findings captured to be shared more widely. The Tackling Loneliness with Transport Fund aims to strengthen the evidence base for how transport might help lonely people. DfT will collaborate with other government departments throughout the project.

The government will:

- ) explore with seven mobility centres in England how they can help to identify signs of loneliness or lack of social connections;
- ) provide funding for community transport driver qualifications;
- ) put the need for inclusive transport at the heart of its approach to the Future of Mobility Grand Challenge, making sure that our future transport system works to overcome problems like loneliness and social exclusion

The Mobility Centres pilot was set up in 2019 by DfT to provide advice through Mobility Centres on alternate means of travel for those unable to drive. The trial is in its concluding stage, with slight delays due to the impact of COVID-19. Once the evaluation has concluded, DfT will evaluate the possibility of full implementation of all thirteen Mobility Centres in England.

The government believes that community transport operators provide vital services that reduce isolation by linking people with their communities, helping take them to shops, work and school, and that the safety of these services matters. The Minibus Driver's Awareness Scheme (MiDAS) is administered primarily by the Community Transport Association (CTA) and is designed to enhance minibus driving standards and promote the safer operation of minibuses. DfT has provided initial funding of £38,000 to adapt and improve MiDAS so that it is better able to meet passenger needs in the future, supporting the wider government objective of delivering a transport system which is accessible for all.

In November 2020, a call for evidence was launched to seek views on DfT's assessment of the emerging trends that will shape rural mobility and how industry, government and rural communities could work together to help harness the opportunities. Respondents identified key issues such as the lack of transport options for rural areas, social isolation, making transport more accessible and the need for proactive government support. An analysis of the responses was published in September 2021, with a view to publishing a Future of Transport: Rural Strategy in due course..."

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/loneliness-annual-report-the-third-year/tackling-loneliness-annual-report-february-2022-the-third-year>



## Scotland – BSOG Changes for s19 & s22 Claimants

Bus Service Operators Grant in Scotland is being replaced with Network Support Grant (NSG) and in the first instance CTs wishing to continue to benefit from reimbursements need to submit an eligibility template. Transport Scotland said: "The Scottish Government is putting in place a new grant to support bus services in 2022-23, the Network Support Grant (NSG). This will include temporary additional financial support during the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The NSG replaces the Bus Service Operators' Grant (BSOG), COVID-19 Support Grant (CSG) and COVID-19 Support Grant - Restart (CSG-R). These schemes will cease on 31 March 2022 and operators will no longer receive funding from those grants after this date." Specific guidance for CT operators is here:

<https://www.transport.gov.scot/public-transport/buses/network-support-grant/>



## Scotland – CTA's Mapping Scotland Project

CTA: "We're running our mapping Scotland project in partnership with our members and Transport Scotland. Through the project, we're going to gather new data and evidence to build a national picture about our sector, the communities you serve and the difference you make. Our goal is to produce the first-ever map of Scotland's community transport sector: a reliable source of useful information about our sector on everything from operators, their activities and their vehicles, to staff, volunteers and users.

Why are we doing this?

1) We need to help our sector to recover from the pandemic. COVID-19 has proven how valuable community transport is, but

it's also been a really challenging period. Now we need to come together to make the case for change to secure better policymaking, greater recognition and more funding.

2) We need to prepare for the future. Our sector faces a number of major challenges, such as an ageing population, funding, recruitment and the transition to net-zero. We need to understand the nature and scale of these issues to demand, design or deliver the investment and support our sector needs.

3) We need to raise our profile. A lack of awareness or understanding of community transport among some politicians and policymakers is holding us back. We need to showcase the diversity and strength of our sector.

4) We need to identify gaps and opportunities. Finding out where there is community transport as well as where there is no provision, will enable us to create new platforms or forums, facilitate knowledge sharing or collaboration and even support the creation of new operators or services. It will also help integrate our sector into wider work around transport planning and integration, like 'plan your journey' apps or Mobility as a Service...

If you want to talk to us about the project, you can get in touch with our Scotland team via [scotland@ctauk.org](mailto:scotland@ctauk.org). You can also contact David Kelly, Director for Scotland via [david.kelly@ctauk.org](mailto:david.kelly@ctauk.org) and Alice Duthuille, Development Officer for Scotland via [alice@ctauk.org](mailto:alice@ctauk.org).  
<https://ctauk.org/mapping-scotland-project/>



Fermanagh - Castle Hume Ladies Golf Club supporting Fermanagh Community Transport's Volunteer Social Car Scheme  
 Impartial Reporter: "Members of an Enniskillen golf club have been 'putting' their support behind a local charity transport initiative by recently donating over £200. Castle Hume Ladies Golf Club held their Christmas outing on December 18 and in lieu of presents, it very generously decided to make a donation of £220 to Fermanagh Community Transport, a local charity which is committed to supporting individuals and communities who find themselves socially excluded and isolated due to poor public transport and no private transport. The cheque was handed over by Lady Captain Kathleen Timoney and vice-Captain Myrtle Chambers to Cathy Magowan, chairperson of Fermanagh Community Transport. Speaking at the handover of the cheque, Kathleen said that many within the Castle Hume Ladies Golf Club were 'deeply struck' by their recent awareness of the work being undertaken by the volunteer social car drivers. These volunteers go about providing essential trips to those individuals who need them to get to non-emergency hospital appointments and GP appointments or who need prescriptions and essential foods collected and delivered due to their vulnerability.

'We have seen the compassion with which this service is provided and the difference it is making, and we felt it was important to acknowledge and celebrate it through this donation,' said the Lady Captain. Cathy thanked Castle Hume Ladies Golf Club for their kind and generous recognition of the lifeline nature of the work of the volunteer social car scheme drivers. She said: 'Our Social Car Volunteer Drivers are exceptionally compassionate and dedicated individuals who give their time and skills to make sure that those most in need get to the essential services and supports they need. Often, the support the individuals receive allows them to continue to live independently within their own home and within their own community. This is hugely important to the mission of Fermanagh Community Transport and the entire staff and volunteer team.'

Jason Donaghy, Manager of Fermanagh Community Transport said: 'If you or someone you know might be interested in becoming a volunteer social car driver, please do get in touch for an informal and friendly chat to see if this is an opportunity which might be of interest to you. If you enjoy driving, have your own car, enjoy meeting and helping people and making a real difference, and have an hour or two a week to spare, we'd love to hear from you. We are especially keen to hear from individuals in the Belleek, Garrison, North Fermanagh, Florencecourt, Roslea and Newtownbutler areas. Full training will be provided and volunteer expenses met.'" <https://www.impartialreporter.com/news/19878399/castle-hume-ladies-golf-club-supporting-fermanagh-community-transport-volunteer-social-car-scheme/>



## Reeth - Community Transport is About More than Getting from A to B

North Yorks County Council: "Reeth Community Transport might provide vital services to an area where bus services are scarce, but the charity's work is as much about 'community' as it is about the transport it provides. The Covid-19 pandemic has meant many organisations have changed the way they operate, with services to help vulnerable members of the community increasingly at the forefront of their work.

Reeth Community Transport was perhaps different to some similar organisations because even before the pandemic, its volunteers offered more than just transport to the clients who relied on it. Many had become friends of the volunteers who made the service work and were there to offer support and assistance as well as the

transport that formed the core of their work.

Through the pandemic, that role became increasingly important, with volunteers launching a befriending service – mainly by phone but on a 'pen pal' basis for those with hearing difficulties – and a host of other forms of assistance. That meant delivery of shopping and prescriptions as well as continuing to take people to medical appointments, including vaccination trips when they became available. Through the pandemic, the charity's work has been supported financially with backing from the County Council's Stronger Communities fund. Today, the charity has returned to some of its traditional services, providing transport to hospitals and support for clients awaiting appointments, as well as shopping trips to various towns.

While those journeys provide the opportunity for safe social contact and fun, the pleasure trips Community Transport volunteers used to organise remain suspended on safety grounds. But a new option has been devised and will be introduced as soon as the Covid situation has subsided enough to allow it. Open Minds is just that – it will bring people together at different locations, with no idea what they will be invited to get involved in until they arrive. The aim is to improve people's mental health as well as providing entertainment, with a combination of surprise activities, refreshments and fun. The project's name was suggested by an 89-year-old, acknowledging the mental health benefits it will bring, along with the openness of those involved to get involved in whatever activity may be featured.

Volunteer Jill Burdis said: 'We are excited about it and were hoping to start in January, but cannot do so at present. We are ready to go when we can, though. We have always provided more than transport and have always helped people with things they could not manage. We have also sat and held people's hands at appointments, we know them all,' she said. Community Transport manager Gail Hall said at the peak of the pandemic around 45 volunteers were involved, with many still present. 'We have lots of volunteers quietly doing things behind the scenes,' she said."

<https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/community-transport/about-more-getting-b>



### Farnham - Manager of Community Transport Scheme Thanked for Years of Service

In Your Area: "The manager of a community transport scheme which runs in Farnham, Surrey has been thanked for his years of service as he hands over the keys to a successor. Waverley hoppa Community Transport serves the communities in and around Farnham, Godalming, Haslemere and Cranleigh and had been run by Steve Forward since 2005. During that time, the fleet increased from eight buses to 25, and the service expects to soon carry its one millionth passenger. Steve said: 'What started out as what I thought would be a temporary role, turned into a 17-year career. What has kept it interesting is no two days were ever the same, every day was a different challenge and going home at the end of the day with the feeling of immense satisfaction knowing that you have made a difference to those who use our services. Working with a team of dedicated and committed employees and trustees, who have also played a massive part in hoppa's success, was another very positive aspect of my role. I wish hoppa continued success for the future.' Under Steve's management, hoppa reduced its dependency on grants from the public purse by introducing new income generating services such as school transport for children with special needs and non-urgent hospital transport.

Rob Stansbury, chairman of trustees, said: 'hoppa has been extremely fortunate to have had Steve Forward to lead it through the challenges of its development for such an extended and successful tenure.

Without him, hoppa would not have been what it is today. Under Steve's leadership hoppa has created its reputation for reliable, friendly, safe and secure transport for every customer whom it serves, throughout the borough of Waverley. We are so grateful to Steve for all his hard years of service to us and the community. I and the trustees are looking forward very much to working with Richard as the new general manager, who will lead hoppa forward to meet the challenges that the future holds, so that we can continue to serve the communities in and around Farnham, Godalming, Haslemere and Cranleigh.'

Steve handed over the keys for the driving seat to his successor Richard Davies on January 10. Richard is no stranger to the transport sector and worked his way up from a customer service representative on the front desk at Heathrow Hertz UK to UK country manager. After leaving Hertz, Richard took on a new challenge as the director of a company offering specialised cleaning services. Richard said: 'I am delighted to join hoppa and am really looking forward to working with the team to further develop our core services within Waverley Borough. I am very proud and excited to be leading the hoppa team, a team who are passionate and dedicated to delivering the highest level of service across the borough.' As general manager, Richard will be responsible for leading hoppa towards a more sustainable future while continuing to provide a first class and accessible transport service."

<https://www.inyourarea.co.uk/news/manager-of-farnham-community-transport-scheme-thanked-for-years-of-service/>



Also at hoppa...

## Farnham Lions raise Hoppa funds

Farnham Herald: "Members of Farnham Lions Club have presented a cheque for £7,433 to help the Waverley Hoppa Community Transport service. The service provides regular transport for disabled, vulnerable and elderly individuals, schools, day care centres and clinics plus shuttle buses for local community activities. The Lions Club donation was raised from its annual golf day at Hindhead Golf Club (HGC). HGC captains Dickie Knight and Mary-Rose Seabourne had also chosen Hoppa as the charity to support during their tenure and raised a further £8,067 to bring the total to £15,500."

<https://www.farnhamherald.com/news/farnham-lions-raise-hoppa-funds-503257>



## Eccleshall - Voluntary Car Scheme Appeals for Drivers as it Restarts after Covid

Express and Star: "A community transport scheme is looking for more volunteer drivers to help more people get to medical appointments in rural areas. Peter and Joy Jones set up the Eccleshall Voluntary Car Scheme in 2018 to transport people to medical appointments. After a couple of years of no activity due to Covid, the couple are back spreading the word about the helpful scheme. 'The scheme started in 2018 but we have had a couple of years of Covid which meant we had to stop,' Peter explained. 'Pretty much all of our drivers are over the age of 70, so the council advised us to stop to protect them. We just didn't want to risk using older drivers, so sadly we had to stop for a couple of years and couldn't do anything. However, we have started back about three or four weeks ago, and it's like starting from scratch really we want to put the word out.

It has mainly been taking people to get their Covid vaccinations – we only do lifts to medical appointments.'

Peter said the service is an important one in Eccleshall, which is near Newport and on the border of Staffordshire and Shropshire. 'It actually all started when a local person asked how they could get from one end of town to the other, and if anyone could give them a lift,' he added. 'Then we actually thought, well maybe we could do something. I got in touch with the community transport people at Staffordshire Council who said they could help us set something up and offer funding help. So we started the scheme. It's all been about trying to help people – Eccleshall is a small county town surrounded by many small villages and it's quite rural so people need transport links. We are mainly looking for more drivers just so we can have more availability to transport people. They don't have set hours or anything, but if a job comes up we ask who is free to take it. So having more drivers will mean more chance of that being a success.

'We also want to just make local people aware of the scheme and that they can register to be customers and we can help them. Many customers perhaps felt nervous to come back, but we want to encourage them to feel safe using the service again. We have set rates, and are often a cheaper choice than many. Drivers get their petrol expenses paid for as well.' To get more information visit the website at [www.eccleshallvoluntarycarscheme.org.uk](http://www.eccleshallvoluntarycarscheme.org.uk) or call Peter to volunteer on 01785 851381."

<https://www.expressandstar.com/news/local-hubs/staffordshire/eccleshall/2022/02/01/voluntary-car-scheme-appeals-for-drivers-as-it-restarts-after-covid/>



## Redditch - Temporary Free Transport to Encourage Activity Participation in Elderly and Vulnerable

Redditch Borough Council: "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 have 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 Dial-a-Ride Community Transport, usually those who are unable to access public transport easily due to disability or older age, can now use the transport 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. If you want to discuss this please contact our Sports Development team. 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. More details about dates are available on the council's website, search for "community classes". Please be aware this 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 (i.e. shopping).

Redditch Borough Council Leader, Cllr 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.' Drive a taxi and want to help? To deliver additional free service, the council will be working alongside 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. If you are able to help, please contact Hayley Gwilliam on 01527 881404 or email

[Hayley.Gwilliam@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk](mailto:Hayley.Gwilliam@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk).

<https://www.redditchbc.gov.uk/news/2021/temporary-free-transport-to-encourage-activity-participation-in-elderly-and-vulnerable.aspx>



## Wales - £1.3m funding boost for community transport schemes

Wales247: "The Welsh Government is investing almost £1.3m to make it easier for people in valley communities and those without access to digital technology to benefit from new and improved public transport, Ministers have announced. The two projects, which include the extension of the Fflecsi bus scheme contact centre and the Western Valleys Transport Pilot, will not only help improve transport links, connect communities and provide solutions that are accessible to all, but also help tackle the climate emergency – with the introduction of new electric buses and the development of options to travel more actively. The Western Valleys Transport Pilot will provide opportunities for people to connect across communities for work, education, health and social activities by developing new and inclusive services whilst improving and making the most of existing investment in active travel and e-bike rental schemes.

Throughout the 12-month pilot, the Community Transport Association (CTA), will work closely with communities in the Amman, Swansea, Dulais and Neath Valleys to understand more about the types of journeys people want to make and help identify the types of transport that are best suited to local needs. These options could



range from the development of active travel provision to community electric car clubs and e-bike loans, making it easier for people to connect to vital services in a more sustainable and healthy way. The initial focus of the pilot will be on existing and traditional community transport provision, through the use of electric mini buses. In addition, investment is being made to expand a service that helps people without access to digital technology to access Fflecsi bus services across Wales. The Fflecsi scheme contact centre, run by Transport for Wales, provides support and help for some of the most vulnerable people in the community who need to book essential travel arrangements, but are unable to do so via the Fflecsi app, providing a lifeline for people to get out and about. The additional funding will enable the contact centre to extend its opening hours, provide additional tailored door-to-door services for disabled passengers or those with other mobility needs and provide more targeted support to communities that use the contact centre. The centre will also work with communities to raise awareness of the service.

Deputy Minister for Climate Change, with responsibility for transport, Lee Waters said: 'Improving transport links in communities is not just about improving services but about changing the lives of people across Wales and is an excellent example of how investment in tackling climate change has far broader community benefits. Making low carbon transport options more accessible, attractive, affordable and easier to use is not only the right and responsible thing to do for the environment, but also plays a vital part in connecting communities.' Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport, Dawn Bowden, who has responsibility for the South Wales Valleys within the Welsh Government, added: 'The Western Valleys Transport pilot we're announcing today is designed to tackle issues so many people in our valleys communities face on a daily basis – infrequent and unreliable access to public transport, which can cause significant issues for people when they need to travel to access work, education, services and social opportunities. This investment is an important part of our work to improve the lives of people living in these communities,

demonstrating this Welsh Government's commitment to the valleys.'

<https://www.wales247.co.uk/1-3m-funding-boost-for-community-transport-schemes>

See also:

<https://www.southwalesguardian.co.uk/news/19905579-amman-valley-public-transport-improvements-welcomed-ms/>



### Newport – Calls for Fflecsi Bus to Cover Newport's Rural Areas

South Wales Argus: "Transport for Wales is facing calls to expand its Fflecsi bus service to cover Newport in its entirety. The current service, which allows people to book journeys outside of usual bus routes and timetables, operates only as far as Duffryn in the west of Newport and Llanmartin in the east of the city. Despite saying it 'cover[s] the whole of Newport' on its website, communities such as St Brides, Peterstone and Marshfield – which are all covered in the Newport City Council area – are not included as part of the service. Similarly, more rural communities to the east of Newport like Parc-Seymour, Llandevaud, Penhow and Llanvaches also fail to fall into the catchment area for the Fflecsi bus. The Fflecsi bus was initially piloted in Rogerstone and St Julian's, before it was expanded to cover a larger portion of the city.

Now, the Welsh Government has said it will give £1.3 million in funding to improve community transport schemes like the Fflecsi bus in valley communities. The additional funding will pay for extended opening hours at the contact centre and additional tailored door-to-door services for disabled passengers or those with other mobility needs. The centre will also work with communities to raise awareness of the service.

One resident of Llanvaches told the Argus that it was unfair that the current Fflecsi bus operation did not include more rural areas. 'I don't have a transport system where I live,' they said. 'As soon as they announced the Fflecsi bus I thought it would be great – but if I wanted to book a Fflecsi bus, the nearest drop off point would still be a car journey away in Llanmartin. We really are the forgotten community out here – we're paying our council taxes but getting the least service from the council. The 73 bus service between Newport and Chepstow used to run each hour but is now on a reduced service. It says on its website that the Fflecsi bus is covering the whole of Newport – well that's just not the case. It's crazy and unfair – Newport city centre is now losing my business as a result.' Fflecsi bus is a partnership between Transport for Wales, Newport City Council and Newport Bus. It's understood that Conservative councillor for Langstone Ray Mogford has been in conversation with Transport for Wales about extending the service beyond Llanmartin – but there are no plans as yet to increase its operation. Transport for Wales have also been approached for comment."

[https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/19891062\\_calls-fflecsi-bus-cover-newports-rural-areas/](https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/19891062_calls-fflecsi-bus-cover-newports-rural-areas/)



### Okehampton – Bill's Bequest is Boost to Transport Group

Okehampton Today: "Okehampton District Community Transport Group (ODCTG) will receive a brand-new wheelchair-accessible vehicle this summer thanks to a bequest from a long-standing volunteer. North Tawton volunteer driver Bill Litherland recently passed away leaving the community group thousands of pounds, which it has invested in a new wheelchair-accessible Citroen minivan. ODCTG coordinator Sue Wonnacott, said: 'Bill is much missed by the staff and many of the clients who remember his kind

nature and comfortable car journeys. We hope that he would approve of us purchasing a vehicle in his memory.' As a great car lover, Bill drove for the ODCTG from May 2006 to June 2012 almost every day until he was well into his eighties. He was often spotted driving his open-top Saab around town. Sue added that in honour of Bill's great love of cars, the transport group decided that buying a new and much-needed vehicle with his bequest would be a fitting memorial to him.

The community transport group already owns a Citroen minivan but it is very much in need of replacement. She said: 'We thought [a new minivan] seemed like an appropriate way to use the money. We were wanting to replace [the current minivan] for ages but it's difficult to get hold of these sorts of vehicles so we were lucky, though we will have to wait until the summer for it.' The only difference between the current van and the new one is the colour, Sue said. The new one will be blue, not red. During his years as a volunteer driver, Bill became known for his dedication to the service and willingly dedicated his early mornings, late nights and weekends to ensure people arrived for hospital appointments on time.

As he got older, Bill diligently got his driving skills tested in order to continue to provide safe and comfortable driving services to the cause that was very close to his heart. Even when he retired as a volunteer driver and started to lose some mobility, Bill could still be found supporting the ODCTG at coffee mornings and was often selling the raffle tickets. Bill had no remaining family and the ODCTG is one of six charities which have received donations from him. The Okehampton District Community Transport Group is a community-led service that provides transport to those living in isolated places or those unable to use conventional public transport due to age, health or disability. The group provides clients with a door-to-door service, available to anyone living in the Okehampton area. For more information visit the ODCTG's website at [www.odctg.co.uk](http://www.odctg.co.uk)."

<https://www.okehampton-today.co.uk/article.cfm?id=441001&headline=Bill%27s%20bequest%20is%20boost%20to%20transport%20group&sectionIs=news&searchyear=2022>



## East Sussex - "Where's the infrastructure?", frustration over pace of electric vehicle revolution

ITV: "A lack of charging points for electric vehicle owners is causing huge frustration for the owner of a community transport service in Sussex. Havens Community Transport has a client base of 450 people who need to travel to and from things such as day centres or hospitals. Paula Woolven, who runs the service, bought two electric vans because she wanted to help the planet. However, she says it's been a logistical nightmare trying to plan journeys knowing she can't rely on their being charging points on the road. Paula has installed a charger at base but it takes up to four hours to charge a vehicle Paula has installed a charger at base but it takes up to four hours to charge a vehicle 'The most frustrating thing for me is the fact that nobody seems to be owning the whole issue because obviously there are power companies that can install them', Paula says. 'Why are they not going into supermarkets into new shops, new builds at the moment? It's just incredibly frustrating and you need electric to get out and about.' Whilst filming, we found the only charging point in Newhaven was broken and Paula says a sign confirming an engineer has been called has now been on display for a year.

Another, at a petrol station three miles away in Peacehaven only had one of three hoses available, and that was not compatible with Paula's vans. Paula did receive a Government grant to install a charger at base, but that only covered a third of the cost and unit takes up to four hours to charge one vehicle. From 2030, the Government will ban the sale of new petrol and diesel cars to reduce harmful

emissions. 'We decided to use electric vehicles because we wanted to be environmentally conscious. So to do that, and it seems that there's no reward for it... You know, the government are saying 'do get electric vehicles we want to phase out fossil fuels', where's the infrastructure?' Lewes District councillor Matthew Bird says the district is leading the way on innovation but said there should be a bigger push from East Sussex County Council and Central Government.

'We're putting in charging points within the next few months, so they're not there at the moment. We've done all the assessments. We worked with UK power networks. We've looked beyond our own car parts to look at community halls, village halls, we've assessed them for the capacity to charge cars. We work with local community groups. We're supporting electric cargo bike scheme. We've got our electric vehicle charging guidance in our planning. So we're pushing that. So we're doing what we can and we're not the transport authority. What we really need is county council to do a lot more in terms of on street charging, and we really need better Government policy.'

An East Sussex County Council spokesperson said: 'The county council recognises that there is a growing level of demand for charging points and that their greater availability is key to increasing the uptake of EVs. We are currently developing a strategic approach to support the increased take up of electric vehicles in East Sussex, including looking at how we might procure the installation of public charging points in a way that addresses the complex range of technical, legal, procurement and practical issues in the most effective manner. Once we have addressed these matters we will be in a position to apply for grant funding to assist with the roll-out of EV charging infrastructure.' The Government last year announced that up to 145,000 extra charge points would be installed every year nationally."

<https://www.itv.com/news/meridian/2022-01-27/wheres-the-infrastructure-frustration-over-lack-of-electric-vehicle-chargers>



## Forres – Osprey Bus Team Needs Volunteers

Forres Gazette: "A local charity that provides free community transport is keen to recruit new trustees. Forres Osprey Bus (FOB) requires a new secretary, a pool of drivers and someone with an interest in mechanics to keep the service running for first time users and regulars including the Forres OAP Association. Trustee Lorna Creswell confirmed that FOB is to review its procedures to simplify bookings following extended periods of non-use during coronavirus lockdowns. She said: 'We want to make booking as straightforward as possible. The vehicle has regular users but could accommodate more. Forres Area Community Trust has a list of groups that have used the vehicle and we are collecting names from anyone keen to be added. We're trying to link activities that older people attend with the use of the bus. We also need folk to tell us where it is needed.'

FOB has provided transport for older people and those with disabilities since 1973. The Osprey Trust meets every two months. FOB's recent AGM was by Zoom but the group has also used the community centre and town hall for face-to-face meetings. Lorna said: 'We're looking for drivers to be in a pool for groups who don't have their own. We also need a secretary to follow up taking notes at our meetings - Jo Lenihan has taken on secretary and treasurer roles until we get help. 'Volunteers are also required for a couple of hours-a-month to drive or check the vehicle.' The bus can be booked by calling 01309 674 388 or by emailing [info@forresarea.org](mailto:info@forresarea.org) marking the email Osprey Bus Booking. Lorna added: 'The usual cost of fuel charged is around 45p per mile. We depend on donations but sometimes these don't cover fuel so we're

reviewing how we can raise funds to keep the minibus going and replace it when needed.'"

<https://www.forres-gazette.co.uk/news/free-bus-service-needs-volunteers-262913/>



## England - What's Next for the Vision for Volunteering?

NCVO: "The Vision for Volunteering is a national collaboration that aims to create a long-term plan for volunteering in England. In December the project team ran 14 workshops on a range of topics, including:

- )] healthy ageing;
- )] employment and skills;
- )] the climate emergency;
- )] health and wellbeing;
- )] resilient communities;
- )] young people leading change and sport and physical activity.

We're thankful to the 350 participants who gave us insights that will help shape a long-term plan for volunteering in England. If you missed out on the workshops, we invite you to run your own consultation workshop. Our downloadable toolkit (<https://visionforvolunteering.org.uk/share-your-vision>) can help you. Please share your findings with us by 28 February (<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/NS4OWI>).



## Dawlish – Special Commendation for Eric

Dawlish Gazette: “Long-serving volunteer driver Eric Smallridge has received his special commendation award. Eric, who has been involved with Dawlish Community Transport for almost 30 years since its early days, was recognised for his service with a Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Community Transport awards. He was presented with his certificate by office manager Sally Preston (right) and her colleague Sally Bartley. Sally Preston, who described him as irreplaceable, 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.” <https://www.dawlish-today.co.uk/article.cfm?id=121939&headline=Special%20commendation%20for%20Eric&sectionIs=news&earchyear=2022>



## Hertfordshire - Improving Transport Access Through the Launch of the HertsLynx DRT Service

Intelligent Transport: “Alice Bowler, Demand Responsive/Community Transport Team Leader at Hertfordshire County Council, tells Intelligent Transport more about the HertsLynx Demand Responsive Transport service and how it is supporting the Council’s efforts to improve transport accessibility for socially disadvantaged

residents and those located in rural areas across the county. Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) first launched the HertsLynx Demand-Responsive Transport (DRT) service in the north and east of the county on 19 September 2021. It has been implemented by the Intalink Enhanced Partnership, with funding from the Department for Transport’s (DfT) Rural Mobility Fund. The HertsLynx operating zone is centred around Buntingford and serves all of the villages in a specified area, labelled as the ‘free-floating zone’. Within this zone, passengers are able to travel between over 250 virtual bus stops. The service also provides access to ‘Key Hub Towns’ (KHTs): Stevenage, Royston, Hitchin, Baldock, Letchworth and Bishop’s Stortford; however, travel to these KHTs is limited to hospitals, train/bus stations and high streets. The HertsLynx service directly addresses the challenges faced by transport-disadvantaged groups evaluated in previous county and local plans. The social exclusion of people living in rural areas who have limited or no access to a car or public transport was a key issue identified in the HCC’s Local Transport Plan (LTP). Likewise, Hertfordshire’s Rural Transport Plan (RTP) found that most of rural north and east Hertfordshire faces accessibility issues. These prevent socially disadvantaged residents from reaching employment, education, health services and food shopping.

Hertfordshire’s RTP and the Intalink Enhanced Partnership and Bus Strategy each concluded that DRT has advantages in providing faster and more direct journeys, offering passengers a one-seat journey where using fixed-route buses alone would require a complex itinerary with multiple transfers. This issue is particularly important in the scheme area’s main town of Buntingford. A council-funded study noted that bus trips between Buntingford and Stevenage are infrequent and particularly circuitous, requiring a transfer and long journey times relative to car travel.

The HertsLynx service will be particularly advantageous for journeys from the east of the county to the west, where there is little public transport available and residents must typically rely on private cars... Within

the first seven weeks of operation, there were over 2,000 passenger bookings on the HertsLynx service, which is an extremely positive start. The datasets and reporting suites provide clear and instrumental insights into trends within the service and allow for continuous monitoring; this is fundamental to ensure that the service remains aligned with the demand and needs of residents throughout the four-year pilot scheme."

<https://www.intelligenttransport.com/transport-articles/132018/transport-accessibility-hertslynx-drt-hertfordshire/>



### Pontllanfraith - Community Transport Charity's Future in Doubt after Loss of Council Contracts

Caerphilly Observer: "The future of a community transport charity is in doubt after it lost its remaining council contracts. Phoenix Community Transport has been operating for around 25 years, providing transport to Trinity Fields School pupils and social services. However, the not-for-profit organisation, based at Penmaen Industrial Estate, Pontllanfraith, has now lost its three remaining school contracts, after it was caught using a vehicle without an MOT and using another which had been declared off the road with a Statutory Off Road Notification. Caerphilly County Borough Council terminated the contracts after it was told of the vehicles and had demanded paperwork from the charity. Kevin Cegielski, director of Phoenix Community Transport, said he and other trustees had been let down by people employed by the charity and blamed the disruption Covid had wrought on the organisation. When the pandemic struck, all contracts were halted – meaning the charity had no income. Mr Cegielski said that while the school transport had resumed, social services had not.

Several of the charity's vehicles were declared to the DVLA as SORN (Statutory Off Road Notification) to save money on insurance. Administrative errors, he said, meant things were missed as the charity begun operating its vehicles again. He said the charity had been fighting an increasingly competitive environment for years – with other providers beating them to contracts on price. Mr Cegielski added: 'It's sad really. [The trustees] have given a lot of time to the charity. We've had ups and downs but have always got through. The writing's been on the wall for a number of years, but it is all to do with price. We've tried to keep a good ship, but we cannot excuse the fact that paperwork was not correct. The buck stops with the directors and the trustees.' Cllr Jamie Pritchard, council Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Property said: 'As soon as we were made aware, we terminated the contract with immediate effect. We acted swiftly and I can confirm that alternative arrangements have been put in place to ensure children are able to be transported to Trinity Fields and back home. Children's safety is paramount to us, so quick and decisive action has been taken.'

<https://caerphilly.observer/news/1007593/community-transport-charitys-future-in-doubt-after-loss-of-council-contracts/>



West Yorkshire - Community Transport Charity Upgrades to 2,250 sq. ft. Brighthouse Site Up North: "National charity, Community Transport Association [sic – this is Community Transport NOT CTA!] has upgraded from its existing West Yorkshire premises, signing a six-year lease on a suite within the recently refurbished Parkview House — part of Woodvale Office

Park in Brighthouse. The not for profit organisation required more space to operate from and so upsized from the 1,600 sq. ft. suite on the second floor, to the larger, 2,250 sq. ft. premises within the same building — owned and managed by Towngate PLC. Community Transport Association is a UK charity which brings people together, to help transform lives and build better, stronger communities. The organisation was established in 1966 and comprises three divisions — CT Passenger: a transport service that delivers contracts for local education, health, and third sector organisations, CT Furniture: collecting and selling second-hand donated items in stores across the West Midlands and Newcastle, and CT Training: which delivers transport-related training to private, public, and third sector organisations.

Suite 1A is a modern, open space incorporating natural stone features and a contemporary open canteen area. The space forms part of two units within the first floor of Parkview House — a former silk mill which was built in the 1800s. The Woodvale Office Park provides an ideal location, set in parklands and close to a swimming pool, gyms, restaurants, shops, and supermarkets. The site has close connections to the main motorway network via J25 of the M62. Speaking of the move, Matthew Haslehurst, finance director of Community Transport commented: 'We were looking for a new residence which would suit the needs of our growing organisation. The suite is bright, modern, and offers the space that will allow us to expand even further. The transition was smooth, and the building is extremely well looked after.' Julia Ford, marketing manager at Towngate PLC, added: 'We are so pleased to be able to assist in the growth of Community Transport within their existing home at Parkview House. The move has allowed the charity to relocate to a modern, refurbished, open plan office which offers the flexibility of a separate training room, meeting room, and break out facilities without sourcing alternative accommodation away from the Woodvale Office Park. We wish the team every success in this exciting new chapter'." <https://www.businessupnorth.co.uk/community-transport-charity-upgrades-to-2250-sqft-brighthouse-site/>



## South Wales - Community Charity Welcomes Electric Bike to Rhayader

Brecon & Radnor Express: "A community charity in Rhayader welcomed a new and exciting addition to its community transport fleet last week. On Friday, February 4, the Triobike taxi, which is an electric trishaw, came to The Arches, Rhayader & District Community Support. A part of the 'Cycling without Age' project in Rhayader, the vehicle will allow volunteers for the charity to take senior and less able residents for bike rides. The bike rides will give residents the opportunity to experience the wind in their hair and get out and about in the fresh air. It will also act as a chance for passengers to stop for a chat or a drink, and get to know their volunteer 'pilot'. Project leader at The Arches, Pippa Boss, said: 'Cycling without Age was started in Copenhagen and there are now bike taxis across the world. We have been able to get ours through funding from the Lottery Community Fund. We have named her Sheila in memory of one of our Dial-a-Ride members who loved getting out into our wonderful countryside. We will train Volunteer Pilots to take passengers from our two residential homes as well as offering rides to our Dial-a-Ride and Memory Lane members – and anyone else who would like to get out and about again'.

Sheila's arrival in Rhayader was welcomed by James Evans MS for Brecon and Radnorshire, along with The Arches trustee and county councillor Kelvin Curry, volunteer pilot Alan Samuel, and Pippa Boss. Cycling without Age Rhayader will have an official launch in April, and start taking passengers on journeys shortly after that. To find out more about Cycling without Age Rhayader, or to sign up as a volunteer pilot or a passenger, please

contact The Arches via their website [www.thearchesrhayader.com](http://www.thearchesrhayader.com) or phone 01597 810921.”  
<https://www.brecon-radnor.co.uk/news/community-charity-welcomes-electric-bike-to-rhayader-510291>



### Northern Ireland - Rural Loneliness has Reached a 'Concerning' Level – Sugden

Agriland: “East Derry MLA Claire Sugden has said older people and those living in local rural communities are experiencing ‘concerning’ levels of loneliness. She has called for an Executive strategy to be developed to deal with the issue – an issue that can lead to mental and physical ill-health. ‘Loneliness – in particular among older people and people in rural areas – is, sadly, not a new phenomenon,’ said Sugden, who is treasurer of Stormont’s All Party Group for Ageing and Older People. ‘Over the past two years, however, the pandemic has exacerbated the isolation and lack of contact experienced by many. Older people are more likely to have health conditions that increase the risk posed by coronavirus, meaning many have further limited the extent to which they leave the house or invite guests round to visit. Poorly-funded rural transport also means that those who can’t drive are particularly isolated. Community transport schemes do great work in rural communities, but they need increased support, alongside expanded and improved public transport services.’

Marie Curie and Queen’s University Belfast this month completed a research project investigating loneliness across Northern Ireland. Sugden said the document was a useful tool for understanding the nature and current

prevalence of loneliness, as well as providing a basis from which to take action. Impact of Loneliness ‘It is well understood that loneliness can significantly impact on a person’s mental health,’ Sugden continued. ‘But it can also affect a person’s physical health. The report highlights the heart-breaking impact of loneliness on people suffering from a terminal or chronic health condition. More than 90% said loneliness increased as a result of the pandemic. We have an active community sector that is involved in reaching out to those in isolation, but as well as the pandemic having affected many of these services, some people simply aren’t connected with them. Identifying and engaging with these people is a vital first step in tackling loneliness. Day care centres – themselves deeply impacted by the pandemic – need to be fully re-opened, with efforts made to re-engage with those who previously used them, and to attract more users. Companion and befriending services are also a great tool that can be used by health trusts. Loneliness is often overlooked or not taken seriously in the big scope of mental and physical well-being. The fact is, it’s a serious and concerning issue. But, thankfully, one that every one of us has the tools to tackle,’ Sugden concluded.”

<https://www.agriland.co.uk/farming-news/rural-loneliness-has-reached-a-concerning-level-sugden/>



Frome - Vandals Drive Charity Bus Service to Search for New Parking Space – Can you Help? Frome Times: “Mendip Community Transport is appealing for help to find a new ‘secure’ parking space in Frome after one of its vehicles was recently vandalised. Last month, one of its vehicles, which are



normally parked overnight in the Cheese & Grain car park, had two of its windows broken – an incident that is currently being investigated by the police. ‘The damage to our minibus is not only costly, but also means that the vehicle is off the road while replacement parts are obtained and fitted, which can impact the services the charity is able to provide for the local community,’ explains CEO of Mendip Community Transport, Tim Blackburn. ‘We have been parking a couple of our vehicles at the Cheese & Grain for a number of years and are very grateful and appreciative of their continued support, but this recent incident has caused us to review our arrangements and therefore we would ask any Frome based business who might be prepared to offer an alternative secure overnight parking location to contact us.’

Mendip Community Transport is a charity that operates across the Mendip area and parts of Sedgemoor delivering various services including transport for individuals and groups who are unable to access or are not served by other forms of public transport. ‘In Frome we operate the Slinky Bus service on behalf of Somerset County Council which is a DRT (Demand Responsive Transport) providing a door-to-door service getting people to the shops, attend medical appointments or meet up with friends and family,’ explains Tim. ‘Our vehicles are fitted with hoists or ramps and therefore we are able to accommodate passengers with a range of mobility issues. Full details of our services are available on our website:

[www.mendipcommunitytransport.co.uk](http://www.mendipcommunitytransport.co.uk).

‘Due to the hard work and dedication of its staff, Mendip Community Transport has continued to operate throughout the Coronavirus pandemic, enabling people to access essential services including getting to vaccination centres.’ If you would like more information about the service, or if you think that you could help Mendip Community Transport with their appeal for a secure parking space, call the charity’s main office on 01749 880613.”

<http://www.frometimes.co.uk/2022/02/02/vandals-drive-charity-bus-service-to-search-for-new-parking-space%E2%80%AF-can-you-help/>



### East Riding of Yorkshire - Number 84 Shuttle Bus on a Wednesday!

Hedon Blog: “Every Wednesday the 84 town centre service for Hedon is ideal to visit the shops, bank, or grab a cuppa. Catch from bus stops or hail and ride on Inmans Rd, Acklam Rd, Cleeve Rd, Cromwell Rd, Drapers lane and Birch Tree Drive.”

<https://hedonblog.co.uk/2022/02/09/number-84-shuttle-bus-on-a-wednesday/>



### North Wales - ‘Remarkable’ First Female Mayor of Colwyn Bay Celebrates 100th birthday

North Wales Pioneer: “A woman who was the first female mayor of Colwyn Bay and previously received the freedom of the town recently celebrated her 100th birthday. Alice Robinson turned 100 on Saturday, February 5 and marked the milestone with a small family gathering at Merton Place care home in Colwyn Bay, where she now resides. It is the latest in a lifetime full of achievements for Alice, who was also awarded a British Empire Medal in 1966 for meritorious service in the Royal Observer Corps. She was a founding member of numerous organisations,

including the North Wales Housing Association (NWAHA), Colwyn Crossroads Care and Colwyn Care and Repair, and was leader of the Liberal Democrat councillors at Colwyn Borough Council. A member of Bay of Colwyn Town Council for 25 years, Alice also chaired groups including Conwy Voluntary Services Council (CVSC), the Conwy branch of the Alzheimer's Society, and Conwy Community Transport... Numerous people who knew Alice from her work with Conwy Voluntary Services Council (CVSC – now Community and Voluntary Support Conwy) also paid tribute to her on her 100th birthday. Wendy Jones, chief executive of CVSC, said: 'Alice served as a trustee from August 2001 until October 2018, and was the chair for at least six of those years. I have been involved in CVSC since 1999, and I remember Alice well, always supportive of the work of CVSC, and always willing to assist where she could...'

[https://www.northwalespioneer.co.uk/news/19904805\\_remarkable-first-female-mayor-colwyn-bay-celebrates-100th-birthday/](https://www.northwalespioneer.co.uk/news/19904805_remarkable-first-female-mayor-colwyn-bay-celebrates-100th-birthday/)



### Oxfordshire - New Bus Service Connects rural Villages Stripped of Scores of Routes

Oxford Mail: "A new bus service run by and for the community is connecting villages that have been stripped of scores of bus routes. First & Last Mile is running minibuses every two hours on weekdays between Standlake, Stanton Harcourt, Northmoor, Hardwick and Bablock Hythe and Eynsham - for onward links to Witney and Oxford - and with Long Hanborough railway station. There is also an extended service to Bartholomew School. The driving force behind it is David Miles, Witney's

parish representative on public transport for over 30 years, who was also heavily involved in the creation of West Oxfordshire Community Transport which stepped in to connect Witney and the Wychwoods after subsidised bus services were slashed by Oxfordshire County Council to save £3.7million costs in 2016. He said: 'We have season tickets and we take a lot of pupils to Bartholomew School from Standlake in particular who are not eligible for free transport. We are basically providing a school bus service. We are full twice a day to and from the school and that pays for the quieter times during the rest of the day. We also take a lot of commuters from the villages to Eynsham to get the main buses into Oxford.'

First & Last Mile are now operating three 16-seater buses, one of which is electric, which may be the first electric rural bus service in the county. It is hoped these pilot services could lead to the creation of similar set-ups in other parts of the county or even the UK. For passengers it's a lifeline, either saving them from hiring a minicab, enabling their commute or trip to school or giving them back their independence. Maggie Sasanow, who lives in Sutton and lost her licence due to epilepsy, said: 'Having no bus service here was catastrophic for me. I have a disabled son who is also epileptic. Now he's getting the 8am service from Sutton which connects to town at Eynsham for his job in Oxford. The timings are not quite working but it's great. But I'm using it to regain my freedom. If I want to go and have a haircut I would have to ask someone to come and take me, it was always so complicated. Now I can do the whole thing by myself, I am an independent individual again. There is such an issue with rural bus services, it's a necessity. It's a huge difference. I've already got the timetable in my head.'

Most of the funding has come from Section 106 funds from housing developers plus the OCC Community Transport Support Grant and a grant from Eynsham Parish Council, however, Mr Miles said the service does have to be largely self-sustaining. He said: 'It's going reasonably well but there are a lot of challenges like buses that don't work. It's a lot of work but it can be done. Everything is done by villagers with all the

drivers coming from the villages. They are people who want to help the community. In most cases they are retired because if you got your driving licence after 1997, you'll need to apply for a minibus licence but we are looking for more drivers, both paid and voluntary, and one of the buses is small enough that it only requires a passenger car licence to drive it."

[https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/19922339\\_new-bus-service-connects-rural-villages-stripped-scores-routes/](https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/19922339_new-bus-service-connects-rural-villages-stripped-scores-routes/)



### Wisbech - 'Tell Me Why I Should Help Save Tesco Bus' says Cambridgeshire Mayor Ahead of Public Meeting

Fenland Citizen: "Users of a much-loved community bus service have a chance to convince Cambridgeshire Mayor Dr Nik Johnson to help save it. Bus 68, operated by Fenland Association for Community Transport and known as the Tesco bus, is facing the axe when funding runs out at the end of next month. Local councillors, users and MP Steve Barclay have all expressed concern over the loss of the service which provides a lifeline to those without their own transport and want to visit Tesco, the cinema and the Cromwell Road retail park. They have been urging the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combine Authority to step in and extend the emergency funding it provided up until March 31 2022 to keep the bus running until completion of the authority's Bus Service Improvement Programme review.

The review is looking at all services across the whole of the Combined authority's area with the aim of identifying where services are most needed. It is hoped that when the

review is complete a more permanent solution will be found for Bus 68, because it is likely to be identified as the type of service that should be prioritised.

FACT runs bus 68 but is now looking for funding to keep it running. Now Mayor Dr Johnson has agreed to attend a public meeting next Wednesday (23) at the Rosmini Centre in Wisbech to hear what people have to say about the bus and just what it means to them.

The meeting, which starts at 7pm, has been organised by the local Labour Party, and Mayor Dr Johnson said: 'I am delighted to have this opportunity to come to Wisbech to hear from you. I campaigned on the values of three Cs - compassion, cooperation and delivering for the community - to be at the heart of all public policy and the driving values of the Combined Authority. I have been made aware of the concerns of the community in regards to the 68 Bus Service. I want to help and I need to understand what it means for the community and work out how we - the CPCA and the Wisbech community- can cooperate to make it a sustainable long term solution. I need to be reassured that this is something that all the community wants. Following that discussion, I'll be happy to talk on any other subjects of concern and demonstrate my full Mayoral commitment to Wisbech and the Fenland communities.'

<https://www.fenlandcitizen.co.uk/news/tell-me-why-i-should-help-save-tesco-bus-says-cambridgeshi-9240451/>



### Coventry - Petrol Price Rise: 'My Car is a Lifeline,' Says Man with Cerebral Palsy Forced to Cut Back on Living Costs

iNews: "People who rely on their cars are being pushed further into financial instability and forced to cut down on essentials like food shopping due to soaring petrol costs. Richard Luke, 44, who has cerebral palsy and uses a wheelchair, told i

that rising fuel prices were putting further strain on his family amid the cost of living crisis. The price of petrol and diesel have both reached 'frightening' record highs of 148.02p and 151.57p respectively and are likely to be driven up further due to mounting tensions between Russia and Ukraine. Mr Luke, from Coventry, said: 'It's like death by a thousand cuts. It's not one huge bill, it's the incremental increases that have crept up on people.' His wife Natalie, 37, drives their hybrid Kia, which is leased with Mr Luke's Personal Independence Payments via the Motability scheme. The scheme allows people to exchange their mobility allowance for the lease of a wheelchair-accessible car, scooter or powered wheelchair...

Mr Luke works as a specialist information officer and is cerebral palsy programme lead at disability charity Scope. Before he began working from home during the pandemic, he would wake up at 4am to give himself time to get to the train station for 9.30 each morning. Despite environmental concerns, he got a car in June 2020 because he was 'just sick of struggling'. He added: 'Trains are a bit like roulette. If you book to get ramp assistance on a train, you've got that anxiety of "are they actually going to be there to get me on the train". Then when you get to the destination, "have they radioed ahead to let their colleagues know that I'm on the train".'

Buses in his city are even more unpredictable, he said, with drivers often reluctant to pull up to the curb and get the ramp out, or wheelchair space taken up by pushchairs. Meanwhile, the community transport service he had previously used to get to medical appointments 'doesn't exist anymore'...In a recent survey of more than 1,000 disabled adults, Scope found 48 per cent had seen their petrol costs rise in the last three months of 2021. The charity's policy manager Tom Marsland said: 'We already know that disabled people are being hit hardest by the cost of living crisis. Rising petrol costs put more pressure on disabled people, who are already facing impossible choices to make ends meet. Our inaccessible transport system means many disabled people and their families have no choice but to use their own vehicles to get

to work, attend vital appointments or see friends and family. A car can be a lifeline. Without targeted financial support, the Government is abandoning disabled people to bear the brunt of the cost of living crisis.'"

<https://inews.co.uk/news/petrol-prices-man-disabled-car-cerebral-palsy-cut-back-living-costs-food-1461825>



Tavistock - We are Here for You, says Ring and Ride Service Calstock Today: "The Tavistock and District Ring and Ride is calling out to residents of Tavistock and the many surrounding areas to remind them that they are still operating and here to help. The service has been working throughout lockdowns and the pandemic transporting elderly, disabled and rurally isolated people without a frequent bus route to the shops, appointments and the town centre but has gradually witnessed a continuing drop in the number of people utilising the service. This decrease, they say, is due to the impact of the pandemic. The ring and ride service is specially equipped with a tail lift and thus access for wheelchairs; it ensures users are able to retain their independence without having to rely on family members or friends for help. Services run door-to-door and drivers assist passengers in many ways.

Hannah Humphries, co-ordinator for the scheme said: 'We're just getting the word out to let the people of Tavistock and the surrounding areas who would use our services know that we're still here and running. We provide essential transport for those who need it, helping those who are vulnerable, elderly, high-risk or shielding.

For anyone worried about leaving the house, everyone involved with Ring and Ride is very conscious of Covid and we have several measures in place to ensure our passengers feel safe. Our drivers are excellent at ensuring passengers' comfort and safety.' Ring and Ride can be contacted on 07939 093232. The service is timetabled from Monday to Friday and all information about the service can be found on the website:

<https://www.traveldevon.info/accessibility/community-transport/ring-and-ride/tavistock-and-district-ring-and-ride/>  
<http://www.calstock-today.co.uk/article.cfm?id=441024&headline=We%20are%20here%20for%20you,%20says%20Tavistock%207s%20Ring%20and%20Ride%20service&sectionIs=news&searchyear=2022>



If you require any advice or support please contact us on 01772-204988 or email [john.atkins@taspartnership.com](mailto:john.atkins@taspartnership.com)