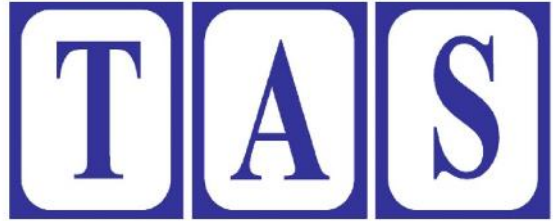




Community & Voluntary Transport at



The TAS Partnership Limited
Passenger Transport Specialists

Community & Voluntary Transport Newsletter No.19 April 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/>

Ukraine Crisis – CT Sector Responses

The humanitarian crisis in Ukraine has prompted a positive response from the CT sector. A range of charities such as Red Cross, Oxfam, Unicef, International Aid Trust, Age International and Save the Children have appealed for donations. Supplies and provisions are gathered at shops, depots and hubs and then transferred to container lorries. Smaller vehicles such as vans and CT minibuses are able to assist with local goods movements as the charities' van resources are fully stretched. CT operators have been able to make vehicles available to those charities who need local goods transport. Another area the CT sector assists in is in collecting donations of goods and provisions from those people who cannot themselves get to the hubs where items are being received. A few examples of CT responses are here:





Braintree Community Transport sent four buses full of emergency supplies to Croydon ready for their onward journey to Poland on 2-3 March. Manager Tracey Corcoran told TAS: "Another example of how CT can react quickly, pull together and support communities." Full story is here:

<https://www.inyourarea.co.uk/news/braintree-town-hall-lights-up-for-ukraine-while-the-town-asks-for-donations/>

FACT Community Transport said on 4 March: "Never shy of a challenge, FACT working together with #Smurfit Kappa March have coordinated collections and drop offs at the FACT base for the Ukraine plight, these will then be loaded onto a lorry for transport to those in need. It has been a fantastic achievement by the staff & volunteers - even family were involved. We have certainly filled 2 buses ready for transfer tomorrow and we are still sorting and loading... we are nearly onto 4th bus and we will be on BBC Radio Cambs about 7am..."

<https://www.facebook.com/FACTcommunitytransport/videos/1604636559896390>



Fenland Citizen: "Practically every town and village in Fenland has risen to the challenge of helping Ukrainian families as they flee the might of the Russian army thousands of miles away in Eastern Europe...The Fenland people's response has been huge and at one of the area's biggest collection points - the offices of Fenland Association for Community Transport in March - there was barely a spare inch of space as the donations mounted up ready to be shipped out on Friday to Buffalo Logistics at Pymoor ready to then be taken to the Ukrainian borders. Nicola Christy, the FACT hub co-ordinator,

said: "It is absolutely incredible, people have been so incredibly generous. We have dozens and dozens of people arriving daily with piles of nappies, baby milk, new clothes and underwear they have just purchased over the road at Tesco and brought straight here. People have been turning up with car loads of bags of clothing and other items including pet food. It is absolutely mind blowing to see'..."

<https://www.fenlandcitizen.co.uk/news/mountain-of-caring-as-fenland-rises-to-challenge-of-helping-9243678/>

Community Transport (Birmingham) is accepting donations for the displaced people of Ukraine at its furniture outlets. CT advises: "The best items to donate include: first-aid supplies, Ovaltine, hot chocolate, protein bars, porridge, oats, instant food, (e.g. instant soup etc), dried fruit and nuts, pasta, coffee, tea and sugar; nappies, sanitary towels, feminine hygiene items, thermal blankets, sheets, and pillows, rain coats, toiletries and hygiene products, and warm clothes - hats, scarves, gloves or thermals for adults, children and babies." Donations can be brought to the following CT Furniture premises:



-) 780-784 Bristol Road South, Northfield, Birmingham B31 2NN
-) Units 17 to 18, Barton Industrial Estate, Etruria Way, Bilston, Wolverhampton, WV14 7LH
-) 4 Kings Square, Sandwell Centre, West Bromwich, B70 7NW

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

Scotland - 'Sustainable Transport for All' – CTA's Manifesto for Scotland's Local Elections

CTA's Director for Scotland, David Kelly: "Scotland goes to the polls on 5 May to choose 1,227 Elected Members in 32 local authorities. These fast-approaching local elections are an important opportunity to review and renew the essential relationship between Community Transport and local government. Local government is a key partner for the Community Transport sector. Many operators receive critical financial support from their local authority. Many rely on council grant funding or are commissioned to deliver local services. In partnership with our members across Scotland, we've developed CTA's manifesto for Scotland's local elections – 'Sustainable Transport for All' – which sets our priorities for local councillors.

Our manifesto emphasises the Community Transport sector's commitment to accessibility, inclusivity and sustainability and explains how we can help local authorities to recover from COVID-19, tackle inequality and deliver net zero. 'Sustainable Transport for All' calls for local candidates and their parties to commit to:

-) Protect funding for local Community Transport schemes;
-) Collaborate with Community Transport to deliver net zero;
-) Invest in transport to health & social care;
-) Build sustainable communities;
-) Reform procurement and commissioning.

Download CTA's Scottish local elections manifesto here <https://cta.uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Scottish-Manifesto-Final-1.pdf>.



Our campaign - Today, with just under two months until polling day, we're launching a campaign to engage and influence as many candidates, councillors and parties as possible. We're asking them to show their support for Community Transport and help us deliver sustainable transport for all. This is our chance to make a difference and secure our sector's future..."

<https://cta.uk.org/scottishlocalelections2022/>. See also:

<https://theedinburghreporter.co.uk/2022/03/sustainable-transport-is-a-must-in-the-2022-elections/>

Scotland – Local Government, Net Zero and Third Sector Inquiry – CTA’s Response



CTA’s Director for Scotland, David Kelly: “The Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee of the Scottish Parliament will be a prominent and influential one in this parliamentary session, as Scotland steps up its efforts to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2045 and end our contribution to climate change. The Committee is conducting an important inquiry into ‘the role of local government and its cross-sectoral partners in financing and delivering a net-zero Scotland’. We have responded to its call

for views, because we believe the third or voluntary sector – including the Community Transport sector – is a key partner for local government.

There needs to be a ‘just transition’ to net zero which leaves no one behind. We’re making the case in this response, as well as in our local elections manifesto, that change needs to work for the people and communities served by our sector. The key points of our submission – which you can download <https://ctauk.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Role-of-local-government-in-delivering-net-zero-CTA-RESPONSE-FINAL.pdf> – are:

-) Local government is a major grant funder of and a key commissioner of accessible, inclusive and sustainable services from the Community Transport sector in Scotland;
-) However, engagement with and support for community-led initiatives by councils varies significantly across Scotland. There is room for improvement and opportunities for collaboration and partnership;
-) Community Transport is leading the way to net zero by delivering shared transport services and transitioning to zero-emissions vehicle fleets. Continued financial support from local government will be essential;
-) Community Transport operators can design and deliver accessible, cost-effective, innovative and sustainable transport solutions which can facilitate modal shift and reduce carbon emissions. However, the sector’s potential has yet to be maximised;
-) Local authorities should help Community Transport operators to expand their capacity to decarbonise transport and increase modal shift – for example by supporting the transition to EVs, creating new car share projects or innovating with e-bikes and e-scooters.

We hope to strengthen our engagement with local government this year. I know from speaking to many members across Scotland since joining CTA in October that this is a key concern and priority for many of you...”

<https://ctauk.org/local-government-net-zero-and-third-sector-inquiry-ctas-response/>

Basildon - IVECO Supports Local Charity, Donating Daily Start Minibus to the Basildon Community Transport Service, via CNH Industrial Solidarity Fund

UK Haulier: “Freedom is something most of us often take for granted. However, for others, it’s not always that easy and services like those offered by the Basildon Community Transport Service (BCTS) can mean the absolute world. Funded by both Essex County Council and Basildon Borough Council, the not-for-profit charity currently runs a fleet of six minibuses, five of which are IVECO Daily. Now in its 20th year, these vehicles operate a mix of dial-a-ride, local bus route and group booking hire services across the Basildon area – the home of IVECO Limited and CNH Industrial. Through the CNH Industrial Solidarity Fund, a global fund, which was set up to support the local areas in which the business operates, IVECO, a pioneering commercial vehicles brand of Iveco Group that designs,

manufactures, and markets heavy, medium and light-duty trucks, are donating a brand-new minibus to the service...BCTCS' operation not only provides both the elderly and less-able members of the community with comfortable and convenient transport for shopping and medical appointments, but also a means of socialisation – something that unfortunately has been seriously lacking for a large number of people throughout the pandemic. The drivers and volunteers often take the time to check in on members and assist with grocery shopping too.

While services have been affected by the COVID 19 pandemic over the past couple of years, forcing a halting of services between March and September 2020, the buses are back working hard and edging back towards 2,000+ passengers per month and a total annual mileage of over 60,000 miles. All vehicles have been retrofitted with a mask supply and hand sanitiser station, supplementing a regular and thorough cleaning regime. 'You can imagine how delighted we were when we were contacted by IVECO with their extremely generous donation and we are proud to have the support of local business. We were originally drawn to the IVECO Daily minibuses for their large passenger capacity, value and reputation for reliability,' commented BCTCS Chief Executive, Tina Tickner. 'While the newest Daily on our fleet is now ten years old, they continue to serve the charity well and we look forward to welcoming the new bus aboard'.



BCTCS upholds a tradition for naming its minibuses after significant people within the organisation, proudly displaying the name across the quarter panels. The new bus is to be named 'Dave' after the oldest working member of the team and longest-serving volunteer, Dave Simms. At 83, 'Honoured' by the recognition, Dave has been with the charity for over a decade, overseeing procedures having originally worked with the sister organisation in Brentwood. Dave's Daily will be hitting the road alongside 'Doreen', another IVECO bus named in memory of Dave's late wife who also worked within the trust. Mike Cutts, IVECO Ltd's Light Business-line Director said, 'We're honoured to be able to support a hard-working charity like BCTCS who strive so hard to improve the quality of life and provide invaluable socialisation within the local community. Long may "Dave", "Doreen" and the other minibuses continue to have a positive effect on the daily lives of those who "meet" them'..."

<https://www.ukhaulier.co.uk/news/road-transport/charity/iveco-supports-local-charity-donating-daily-start-minibus-to-the-basildon-community-transport-service-via-cn-h-industrial-solidarity-fund/>

Devon - Driving up Self-esteem is Just One Benefit of Volunteering with a Transport Charity

Mid-Devon Advertiser: "The top ten benefits of volunteering have been highlighted by transport charity Newton Abbot Community Transport Association (NACTA) which has called for new drivers. The organisation was founded 30 years ago and has since helped thousands of vulnerable and isolated people to get out and about across the district. Lives have been changed for the better by NACTA's fleet of vehicles and, crucially, those people who get behind the wheel. Drive up your self-esteem and drive for this charity. While a small number are paid staff, many are volunteers without whom the service would fold. With demand picking up as the country fights back from the pandemic the charity has launched a quest to boost the number of drivers on its books.



'Make no mistake, by becoming a volunteer driver you will improve not only our customers' lives but yours too,' said NACTA Chair Nigel Canham. 'From personal experience of volunteering I know there's a reward to be had that's about something more than money. I didn't need proof but checked anyway with a major recruitment firm Indeed.com. They list the top ten benefits of volunteering as providing a sense of purpose, a sense of community, meeting new friends, increasing social skills, improving self-esteem, gaining skills, better job prospects, fun, happiness and

getting people out of their comfort zone. That's quite a return on an investment of what might be just a few hours a week.' One Teignbridge man who has already signed up is Adrian Deane, former landlord of the Rock Inn at Haytor who went on to spend more than 30 years working for a major brewery. Now driving two days a week with NACTA he said: 'I wanted to do something useful rather than just sit around and I like the craic I have with the passengers. Some have even phoned in saying how much they appreciate what I'd done for them and it makes you feel good when they take the time and trouble to say how much they've enjoyed something.' NACTA operates out of offices within Newton Abbot multi-storey car park and provides services across much of the district. For volunteering opportunities call 01626 335775 or email manager@newtonabbottcta.org."

<https://www.middevonadvertiser.co.uk/news/drive-up-your-self-esteem-and-drive-for-this-charity-515303>

Warwickshire – Fuel Prices: Transport Charity Worried over Costs

BBC: "A charity providing community transport in rural Warwickshire says the service could suffer over rising fuel costs. Voluntary Action Stratford-upon-Avon co-ordinates more than 130 drivers to get people to medical appointments. Petrol prices hit a record high on Monday as oil and gas costs soared amid fears of a global economic shock from Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Charity volunteer Mick Smith said the situation was having a 'knock-on effect' on the community scheme. Passengers pay £3 for each journey, and 45p a mile, but the soaring cost of fuel means those fees no longer cover drivers' expenses, the charity says. In turn, the team of volunteers would become 'reluctant to do the journey', explained Mr Smith. He added: 'It will have a knock-on effect on picking these people up who rely on us'..."



<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-coventry-warwickshire-60735414>

Budleigh - The Amazing Work of Seachange Volunteers

Exmouth Journal, Marc Jobson (Budleigh Hub Manager): "Sometimes one simple conversation just makes you stop and think. I thought I was fully aware of the amazing things Seachange, its staff and volunteers got up to. But when I'm not looking they even surprise me. I am not always on the frontline meeting clients and their families. I'm usually to be found hiding away in my office battling with my email inbox. Feeling the need to touch base I volunteered to transport a lovely guy (I'll call him John) and his wife to Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital for a scan. As we drove to Exeter the conversation flowed. John told me about his extensive career in the merchant navy and the teaching he did to train the next generation

of naval officers. He explained the places they had lived all over the UK in great detail and with affection. We spoke about the demise of the Exmouth Dock and the effect it must have had on the workers and establishments such as the local pub, The Beach Hotel.

Then John asked, 'Where are we going?' It was only then I realised John had Alzheimer's. A cruel disease that robs the person and their family of many happy memories. It affects not only the memory but the brain as a whole interrupting, behavioural, social and motor skills. The disease had clearly taken its toll on John and his wife. Yet, they both had great dignity and warmth. I asked how they found out about our community transport service. John explained, with a little help, that he regularly attends our Activity Club. Only on Tuesday, he had been making bunting for the Queen's Jubilee. He said he really enjoyed the sessions as he got to meet other people and socialise. He said the food cooked was lovely and so was Ally who ran the sessions. It also gives his wife time to spend on herself.



The Activity Club meets every Tuesday and Thursday. They socialise, chat, play games, sing and exercise with our nursery children from Jurassic Childcare. Volunteers such as Alison and Faith seem to enjoy the group as much as the clients. As we continued our journey I explained other sessions we offer that might be able to help John. We host cognitive stimulation therapy run by Active Minds and a Memory Café. We also have exercise classes such as 'better balance' which would allow John to help stabilise his motor skills and thus fall over

less. I also pointed his wife in the direction of Admiral Nurses who are on hand to help family members of those with Alzheimer's. One simple car journey and two great people met. What a wonderful way to find out the real way Seachange, its staff and volunteers touch people's lives."

<https://www.exmouthjournal.co.uk/news/health/seachange-charity-in-budleigh-8722192>

Tendring - Pride of Tendring Awards Honour Community Heroes



Daily Gazette-News: "Community heroes were recognised at a ceremony for the Pride of Tendring awards. Award winners came from a wide range of organisations and charities received their accolades in front of more than 200 people at Clacton's Princes Theatre. The event was organised by Tendring Council to highlight those who do so much in the community. Jeff Bray, chairman of Tendring Council, said the 19 recipients do good deeds without expecting rewards. He said: 'They are thoroughly deserving of the accolades, and it is a small thank you for everything they do for our society. This

unique event, now celebrating its 10th anniversary, has during those ten years, recognised a substantial number of individuals and groups for the work they so unselfishly do. What a

privilege it was to meet some of the people who do so much to make our district the great place that it is. Each and every one of them has made a real difference and they represent a wide variety of groups and organisations from our district.”. One of the winners was Tendring Community Transport.

<https://www.gazette-news.co.uk/news/19936581.pride-tendring-awards-honour-community-heroes/>

Cumbria - Call for New Volunteer Minibus Drivers in Wigton

News & Star: “Residents of Wigton who are looking for a new opportunity have been offered the chance to help the community by the County Council. New faces are needed to join Cumbria County Council’s voluntary ‘Community Wheels’ minibus service - providing group transport where there is no public transport service. We are specifically looking for Volunteer Minibus Drivers in and around Wigton. All expenses are reimbursed. As well as learning new skills and providing a lifeline for people without access to transport, signing up as a volunteer is a good way to meet new people and give something back to the community.



Councillor Keith Little, Cumbria County Council Cabinet member for transport, said: ‘Our volunteers do a fantastic job and play a vital role getting people out and about, we couldn’t provide a service without their valued efforts. We’re always looking for more volunteers to support our community transport schemes, so if you have some time to spare we’d love to hear from you.’ Anyone interested in finding out more should contact Katy Wood, the council’s Voluntary Transport Officer by phone on 07788 396194, or by visiting www.cumbria.gov.uk/communitywheels.”

<https://www.newsandstar.co.uk/news/19965572.call-new-volunteer-minibus-drivers-wigton/>

Scotland - Over £62m for Zero-emission Buses in Scottish Government Awards Bus Challenge Funding

TransportXtra: “The Scottish Government has awarded over £62m through the first phase of the Zero Emission Bus Challenge Fund (ScotZEB). ScotZEB phase one has offered awards of £62m to nine bus operators and local authorities for 276 buses and associated charging infrastructure. This is the largest investment made in Scotland to



decarbonise buses, supporting the Scottish Government’s Mission Zero ambition for transport. The funding will support operators in replacing 276 old diesel buses with new battery-electric models and the required charging infrastructure... Duncan Hearsum, chief executive of the Order of Malta Dial-a-Journey in Stirling, said: ‘We’re pleased to be hosting an EV charging station for Stirling Council at our premises which has been funded through ScotZEB, offering fast and easy access to the Springkerse park & ride facility. As the leading community transport operator operating across the Forth Valley, we want to take climate action and transition to a zero emission fleet. Sharing an EV charging facility on our site will be a cost effective way for us to start the shift to electric and will help us accurately evaluate our infrastructure needs’.”

<https://www.transportxtra.com/publications/local-transport-today/news/70734/over-62m-for-zero-emission-buses-in-scotland>

Wales - Community Council Launches Village Minibus Service

Cambrian News: "A community mini bus service is being launched in Aberporth. Aberporth Community Council, working in partnership with local community transport provider Dolen Teifi, plans to run the disabled accessible bus as a community pilot over the summer months. The community bus will be able to transport local residents from outlying villages into Aberporth and can also be used by community groups. There are also plans by the community council to provide a park and ride service to ease summer parking problems in the village.



Volunteer drivers will be an important part of the pilot scheme, if you are an organisation or a group that wants to use the minibus or an individual that wants to drive, full MiDAS driver training is given. Community council chairman Cllr Aled Thomas said: 'We think this will be a valuable initiative for the area and enable us to plug gaps in the existing bus service. It will rely on volunteers to make it a success and I'd ask anyone interested to please get in touch.' Tom Cowcher Chair of Dolen Teifi added: 'We are really excited to be working with Aberporth Community Council. The minibuses will provide

groups and organisations in and around Aberporth with access to essential community services.' Anyone interested in volunteering should contact Aberporth Community Council at clerk@aberporthcommunitycouncil.gov.uk. For further information on booking the minibus or MiDAS driver training please contact Dolen Teifi on 01559362403 / info@dolenteifi.org.uk." <https://www.cambrian-news.co.uk/news/community-council-launches-village-mini-bus-service-515448>

Bungay - End of the Road for Pilot Scheme Aimed at Connecting Isolated Communities

Beccles & Bungay Journal: "A community transport pilot aimed at connecting isolated villages has ended after a lower than expected usage. Delivered by the Bungay Events and Business Association (BEBA) and BACT Community Transport, the scheme offered vital transport to Wainford, Shipmeadow, Barsham, Iketshall St Andrew, Iketshall St John, Iketshall St Lawrence, Iketshall St Margaret, South Elmham St Peter, South Elmham St Michael, All Saints, Rumburgh, Homersfield and Flixton. It offered residents in the Saints area an opportunity to travel into Bungay for market days from October. Sponsored by a grant from East Suffolk Council's Community Partnership fund and a substantial donation from district and county councillor Judy Cloke's East Suffolk Council Enabling Communities Fund, the Bungay SHoppa trial ran for 15 weeks.

The SHoppa bus, driven by Mick Smith-Howell, became a familiar sight in the villages north and south of the A144, although the picturesque roads were not without hazards, with some impassable during the winter. Despite attracting a small and loyal number of passengers, Mr Smith-Howell often found himself with just one or two passengers on board. Councillor Judy Cloke said: 'I visit the villages in my ward regularly and a recurring theme when meeting people has been the lack of rural public transport. Active and sustainable transport solutions is also one of the priorities of the East Suffolk Community Partnerships, so it was encouraging to find BEBA members were thinking along the same lines as I. This has been a good opportunity to work together and provide a pilot which, while not as heavily used as I would have hoped and expected, we have learned much from this scheme and this will help in the development of other projects.'



While the impact of Covid-19 may have been a factor in the low passenger numbers, the group believe the pilot has shown there isn't sufficient demand for a regular service between the Saints and Bungay. BEBA chair Didy Ward said: 'The lack of any kind of public transport linking the Saints to Bungay was recognised when BEBA, along with Bungay Town Council, drew up our Town Centre Action Plan in 2019. With councillor Cloke's backing, we felt the time was right to

try and rectify that through this pilot scheme. I rode the route with Mick on the return journey one Thursday and it was a real treat to see the wonderful views around the Saints with no fear of getting lost. It gave me an idea that perhaps BEBA, with a commercial mini-bus service, could run excursions in the summer months for visitors to Bungay to also enjoy the magic that is the Saints.'

Lessons learned from the pilot project will inform another minibus scheme BACT hopes to run in the northern parishes of Lowestoft. Debbie Blowers, BACT manager, said: 'Our dial-a-ride service could be used by any group of people getting together to go out, whether that is to Bungay, Halesworth or Beccles, for shopping or any other reason and we also run a Community Car service for individuals.' Anyone looking to get involved and volunteer with BACT is urged to visit www.bactcommunitytransport.org.uk." <https://www.becclesandbungayjournal.co.uk/news/business/bact-waveney-valley-transport-pilot-ends-8707456>

Powys – Member of Senedd Visits Group Working Tirelessly for Community

County Times: "James Evans visited a community organisation in Powys last week to hear about the fantastic work they are doing for local residents. Mr Evans, Member of the Senedd for Brecon and Radnorshire, heard about the work Builth Wells Community Support (BWCS) is undertaking for the town and surrounding areas, which has been helped by £100,000 of National Lottery funding during the pandemic. BWCS successfully applied for a £99,795 grant to cover buying, running and driving a new electric vehicle over the next three years. Mr Evans heard first-hand about how the scheme was launched for the local community. With the aid of funding the organisation was able to expand its community transport provision so that more isolated and vulnerable people can access this vital service, improving their health and wellbeing. The grant will also help fund salaries, vehicle lease and running costs.



Eironwy Phillips, chair of BWCS, said: 'It was a welcomed opportunity to speak with our MS today and to summarise the difficulties that we face in rural areas. We were able to showcase our latest project which is an electric accessible vehicle. This has enabled us to expand our transport services to an even wider population of Builth.' Mr Evans added: 'It was fantastic to visit Builth Wells Community Support and to hear about all the fantastic work they do locally.

Groups such as this are vital in rural communities who rely on services such as these to help the isolated and vulnerable. I applaud their hard work and will always be just a phone call away.' Back in 2020, the community support service also received a £10,000 grant to provide support to elderly, vulnerable or self-isolating households, by delivering essential items and providing transport to medical appointments during the pandemic.

John Rose, Wales director at the National Lottery Community Fund, said: 'It's rewarding to see the incredible work that Builth Wells Community Support offer their community and it has been wonderful to see how they have managed to adapt their services throughout the lockdown period.' Nicknamed 'Evie', the electric vehicle can transport people and wheelchairs and was officially unveiled alongside the official opening of the community support's new premises at 1 Groe Street last September. Peter James, the High Sheriff of Powys, cut Evie's ribbons, with Builth mayor Gwyn Davies cutting a ribbon to officially open the new home for Community Support. The charity moved in during the pandemic and were delighted to finally show off their new home which is centrally placed in Builth, directly opposite the main Groe car park. Their team of volunteers also run a lunch club, foodbank and organise shopping and prescription delivery."

<https://www.countytimes.co.uk/news/19942950.ms-visits-powys-group-working-tirelessly-community/>

Forfar - End of an Era for Community Bus

Angus County World: "Forfar Community Bus Trust has announced it can no longer operate the Forfarian bus. Sadly, like so many local organisations, it does not have enough volunteers to continue running the service. In line with regulatory requirements, the assets including money and a bus have been distributed among local causes, primarily those serving the elderly and less able members of the community. The 'Forfarian' bus itself has been donated to Lawson Memorial Church to help it continue community services for its congregation and local people in need. These include lunch and youth clubs, shopping trips for the elderly and regular Sunday worship.



Minister Rev Dr Karen Fenwick is delighted to be able to replace a much older and smaller bus. Kathleen Welsh, Forfar Community Bus Trust chairperson said: 'A community bus was the idea, over 40 years ago, of the late Doug Nicol, a local man with links to the community council. With its help, money was raised by donations from local businesses, organisations, other charities, individuals, and fund raising events. The first of five buses started running in early 1982,

serving a variety of local organisations, friendship clubs, bowling clubs, churches, sheltered housing residents and occasionally helping out Forfar Day Care. The most regular users were the Monday Club which has also folded due to lack of volunteers.' She added: 'The Trustees are disappointed the service has come to an end and we hope that the money distributed will enable the recipients to continue their good work.'"

<https://www.anguscountyworld.co.uk/news/human-interest/end-of-an-era-for-community-busonecms6a78534d-3e94-4949-90e9-e10b376be62a/>

Lyme Regis - Essential Community Transport Still on the Road Thanks to Council Grant

Lyme Online: "An essential community transport service has remained on the road thanks to core funding from the town council. For many years the council has provided annual grants to the Axe Valley and West Dorset Ring and Ride Service but what the organisation really needed was longer term funding to provide some security. In 2020, the council agreed to award a grant of £1,500 per year for the next five years, helping the service through the pandemic and beyond. The service has been in operation since September 2021, running community transport for the West Dorset and East Devon areas.

Transport is provided for the elderly, disabled, parents with young children or people living in isolated areas where there is no adequate public transport. The door-to-door service offers passengers security and comfort, taking a lot of the strain out of shopping. The fares are reasonable, with morning shopping trips to Bridport, Dorchester, Honiton, Axminster and Chard costing £5 return. There is also a Passenger Club for each zone that offers a weekly afternoon trip and a day trip on one Saturday each month. The annual membership fee is £10 and trips include Sidmouth, Otter Nurseries, Sherborne, the Somerset Levels, Weymouth, Dorchester, Lynton and Lynmouth, Glastonbury, Wells, and Swanage.



The service covers isolated rural areas and offers a lifeline to many who may find other forms of transport inappropriate or simply lacking. For further information and details about any of the trips available, contact the Ring and Ride office on 07510 255965."

<https://lyme-online.co.uk/blogs/work-to-protect-historic-lyme-regis-guildhall-now-complete/>

Cambridgeshire - Wisbech Tesco Bus Funding Approved to Keep Service 68 Running

Fenland Citizen: "An axe-threatened community bus has won a reprieve with news the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority is to provide £15,000 of temporary funding. News of the cash comes less than a week after Cambridgeshire Mayor Dr Nik Johnson was in Wisbech to attend a meeting aimed at convincing him to step in a help save the popular Bus 68 service, known locally as the Tesco Bus. Dr Johnson was impressed by the turn out at a public meeting on Wednesday (23) organised by the Labour party and attended by users and supporters of the service which is operated by Fenland Association for Community Transport. The service was threatened with having to cease running because of a lack of funding.



It had previously been funded by Section 106 money from Tesco but that has since run out and the Combined Authority stepped in to agree to temporarily keep it running until March 31 this year. With that deadline looming a campaign to save the service was launched and pressure put on Mayor Dr Johnson to intervene and provide further temporary funding until a long-term solution could be found. Having attended the meeting and then ridden the bus on Thursday (24) to see just how much the bus meant to users who rely on it to get to out of town shopping including Tesco and the Cromwell Retail Park, as well as the cinema, Mayor Dr Johnson has agreed to provide the £15,000 of Combined Authority money. That will keep the bus running for the next six months, by which time it is hoped that a more sustainable solution can be found to ensure the service's future.

Mayor Dr Johnson, who attended the public meeting with the Combined Authority's head of transport, Rowland Potter, said he needed to ensure that the Combined Authority continues to provide public transport services which are good value for money and successfully meet the needs of those who use them. The service runs on a circular route between Horsefair Bus Station and Tesco (Cromwell Road). There are also stops at Aces Eye Clinic, Wisbech Retail Park, College of West Anglia, Queen Mary Centre and Rosmini Centre. Mayor Dr Johnson said: 'It was good to meet the passengers and see the route and the community it serves for myself. It was clear there is a real community spirit in Wisbech, and they were passionate about saving the bus service. I am glad that the Combined Authority will continue to support the service until a more sustainable option can be put in place. Cooperation within the community is needed for long-term survival of this service, and this involves encouraging more people to use the bus.'

<https://www.fenlandcitizen.co.uk/news/wisbech-tesco-bus-funding-approved-to-keep-service-68-runnin-9242455/>

Suffolk - Connecting Communities, Changing Lives: Community Transport Making a Positive Impact – New Impact Report

Suffolk On Board: "Connecting Communities is Suffolk's rural transport solution for people who want to travel around our county but don't have access to a regular bus service. Through this report, a story is told about our individual transport providers that help make Connecting Communities possible along with personal stories from people and communities who have benefitted from using the service."



Download the report here:

<https://www.suffolkonboard.com/content/download/xvDZVXUVBjq7/Connecting+Communities+Impact+Report+%28final%29.pdf>

<https://www.suffolkonboard.com/news/connecting-communities-changing-lives/>

Sussex - Crawley Community Transport Launches New Volunteer Car Driver Scheme

Sussex World: "A new scheme aims to connect volunteer drivers to people in the local community who need help getting medical and hospital appointments. The scheme, run by Crawley Community Transport, involves local volunteers using their own cars to pick up members of the local community at their homes, and take them to medical and hospital appointments, wait for them, collect and return home. It will also help people to get to social settings, local clubs or visit family and friends. This service is available to anyone who would struggle to use mainstream transport. Crawley Borough Council has provided some seed funding to Crawley Community Transport for the Crawley Volunteer Car scheme being launched this week. The charity is currently establishing a network of volunteer drivers using their own vehicles. CT Sussex is recruiting local volunteers who must be over the age of 21 and have at least two years driving experience.



The scheme will support the established Dial-a-Ride Minibus assisted transport service which has been running in Crawley for many years. MP Henry Smith, said: 'I welcome Crawley Community Transport launching their new Volunteer Car Driver Scheme; it's an initiative which will be a significant benefit to local residents needing support getting to and from medical appointments or helping those who would otherwise struggle visit family and friends. Becoming involved is a great way to volunteer too and make a real positive difference.'

Registration with Crawley Community Transport is free. Just call their offices if you would like to benefit from any of the services. Passengers using the volunteer car service are charged at 50p per mile. Authorised carers travel free. Crawley Community Transport is currently recruiting volunteer drivers, who will be paid mileage expenses. If you are interested in this volunteering role, please call them at Crawley Community Transport which is based at the Charis Centre in Crawley. You can contact them by Phone: 01293 523764 or Email: carscheme@ctcrawley.org.uk." CT Sussex CEO Matt Roberts introduces the new scheme in this video interview: <https://www.msn.com/en-gb/cars/news/ceo-matt-roberts-of-crawley-community-transport/vi-AAUJBi9>. <https://www.sussexexpress.co.uk/news/people/crawley-community-transport-aims-to-help-locals-in-need-3600354>

Suffolk - GoStart Community Transport Named as Finalist for the Suffolk High Sheriff Awards

East Anglian Daily Times: "The shortlist of Suffolk volunteers and organisations who spent the past year tirelessly devoting their time and energy for the good of their community has been announced. The High Sheriff Award nominations have been revealed after High Sheriff Edward Creasy invited people to nominate individuals and organisations who have gone above and beyond to support the county. Awards will be given out in six different categories, including a 'Supporting the Isolated Award', which recognises those who have worked during the Covid-19 pandemic to support those who were isolated, lonely and lacking in hope. Mr Creasy has been High Sheriff of Suffolk since April 2021. He said: 'We have received an exceptional response this year with over 130 nominations for the panel to consider.'

He announced the awards live on BBC Radio Suffolk at 8:45am on Wednesday, March 16. The broadcast was hosted by Mark Murphy and Lesley Dolphin, who were joined by Tim Holder, Suffolk Community Foundation's Head of Public Affairs. He said: 'There has certainly never been a more important time to tell the stories of all those shortlisted, and find many more new supporters for their work. Year after year the awards go from strength to strength. We are incredibly grateful to the team at BBC Radio Suffolk for offering us the opportunity to invite a much bigger audience of their listeners to join us for this important celebration'."



GoStart Community Transport is one of three nominees in the category Supporting the Isolated Award.

<https://www.eadt.co.uk/news/suffolk-volunteers-will-get-high-sheriff-award-8738116>

Wiltshire - Town Mourns Football and Speedway Fan who Played Huge Role in Civic Life

Gazette & Herald: Malmesbury is mourning one of its best known characters. Former town clerk Phil Rice, 76, knew almost everyone because he was involved in so many activities, from helping to form the youth football teams to being part of the team organising the annual Remembrance Day parade. He was involved with the district community transport group and the league of friends 'A lot of what Phil did was for others. He was hugely committed to the groups and charities he became involved in, just quietly getting on with things,' his family said. 'Phil loved Malmesbury, and really did know just about everyone in town'..."

<https://www.gazetteandherald.co.uk/news/19963477.town-mourns-football-speedway-fan-played-huge-role-civic-life/>



West Lancashire – Dial-a-Ride Set to Receive Funding Boost from Borough Council as Petrol Prices Rise

WLDAR Press Release: "Following months of concern and negotiation, West Lancashire Dial a Ride was confirmed in the West Lancashire Borough Council budget, with an infrastructure grant of £25,000 allocated. This follows on from their successful bid for Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding, ensuring the service is safe to continue operating over the financial year 2022/2023. Philip Walker, Manager at West Lancashire Dial a Ride added: 'We cannot thank West Lancashire Borough Council enough for this sound investment in our Dial a Ride service, which provides a vital service to help residents access local services. Also, after two years of restrictions it's more important than ever that people who cannot use public transport have a way to be able to get out, go shopping or just have the occasional coffee with friends. In light of rising fuel costs for both ourselves and our customers, this provision is so badly needed to enable us to continue to provide our service and indeed grow and expand to offer transport to more and more elderly, vulnerable, disabled and isolated residents across the borough. Residents can contact us on 01704 893 373 or visit www.wldar.org.uk where they can submit an email enquiry if they prefer. My thanks to council officers and councillors and particularly the support from Cllr Gareth Dowling with whom we work very closely with, who found a way to include us in their budget, and who have always been so supportive over the years.'



Cllr Gareth Dowling, portfolio holder for communities and community safety at WLBC added: 'Not only were energy and fuel prices already on the way up including through the increase in the price cap, but the situation in Ukraine has now meant even further rises in the price of fuel, which could be so damaging to an organisation like Dial a Ride. I am pleased that the portfolio holder for finance felt we could include this allocation in the budget and we received cross-party support. Now, we will continue to work with and support Dial A Ride to promote its service to our residents and tackle isolation, loneliness and hunger with DAR's support'."

Special Summit Held to Look at the Future of Transport Across Malvern Hills District

Malvern Observer: "The first Malvern Hills District Transport Summit of the year has been held to provide updates on public, private, community and voluntary sector providers, along with walking and cycling. 'Connected Transport' was the theme for the get-together held last month. Worcestershire County Council provided an update on the Public Transport Network and Bus Service Improvement Plan, and Local Walking, Cycling and Infrastructure Plans, including bids for funding to support its delivery. Attendees also heard from Malvern Hills Community Car Club, which is aimed at improving accessibility to transport for residents in rural areas. The project will reduce carbon footprints by supporting community car clubs and e-bike schemes. The district council has provided a grant of over £124,000 to support schemes and is reaching out to communities to get involved in setting up car clubs within their own communities.

Other investment by the district council, including new crowdfunding opportunities, were also discussed. This included the £150,000 People Make Places and £150,000 Ticket to Ride funds. Among the guest speakers were Tina McLoughlin, Worcestershire County Council's transport infrastructure and commissioning manager, Robin Coates, Co-founder of Malvern Hills Car Club, Kate Walton, Chief Officer of Community Action Malvern and District, John Driver, Chairman of Teme Wheels, and more. Coun Sarah Rouse, Malvern Hills District Council's Portfolio Holder for Environment, said: 'We were delighted to host this summit as transport is a significant priority for the council as outlined in our five-year plan actions on community transport, active travel and carbon zero. The summit gave us the opportunity to share plans, visions and next steps for improvements across the transport network, to ensure that we do so in a connected and sustainable way, with asset based approaches at the heart of this. The Ticket to Ride Fund is available to apply for now, visit www.malvern hills.gov.uk/crowdfunding for more information. Go to www.malvern hills-carclubs.org.uk for more information on the Malvern Hills Community Car Club."



<https://www.malvernobserver.co.uk/news/special-summit-held-to-look-at-the-future-of-transport-across-malvern-hills-district/>

Epping Forest - New List of Volunteering Opportunities Released

Epping Forest Guardian: "The latest list of volunteering opportunities in Epping Forest has been released by a charity which is urging people who have never considered getting involved to think again. The list has been released by Voluntary Action Epping Forest (VAEF) and there are a wide range of different activities available, from being a boat skipper on the rivers Stort and Lea with CanalAbility, tour guides at the Royal Gunpowder Mills, getting involved with the Good Neighbours scheme with befriending and 'neighbourly jobs' in Loughton and helping out at one of the three St. Clare's Hospital shops.



Other roles include supporting people with mental health needs at the Open Door Loughton Friendship group, being a minibus or car driver for VAEF or Epping Forest Community Transport, a bucket collector for Accuro (a charity providing services for children, young people and adults with disability) or becoming trustees for Voluntary Action Epping Forest and Epping Reuse. Maggie Gilchrist, who organises the volunteering services for Voluntary Action Epping Forest said: 'We know from feedback that volunteering can be life changing for both the people helping out as well as the people who receive help. It gives everyone a new outlook on life and creates belonging and purpose. Get involved in volunteering – you won't regret it!'. Details on all of available volunteering opportunities can be found on Volunteer Essex www.volunteersex.org or call Voluntary Action Epping Forest Volunteer Centre on 07443 264422 or volunteering@vaeef.org.uk."

<https://www.eppingforestguardian.co.uk/news/19960007.new-list-epping-forest-volunteering-opportunities-released/>

East Anglia - Borderhoppa bus service for Diss and Harleston on the brink of going under

Diss Express: "The only community bus service in Diss and Harleston has warned that it may have to shut down if passenger numbers do not pick up - leaving hundreds of residents unable to make essential journeys. Borderhoppa, which runs a door to door transport service for elderly and vulnerable residents in villages across south Norfolk and north Suffolk, has reported seeing passenger numbers halve since the pandemic began. The service, which is funded through South Norfolk Council and Norfolk County Council, is now worrying that 'they won't be here in a few years' time if things don't pick up'. Tom Clarke, operations manager at Borderhoppa, said: 'The pandemic really has affected us. We have seen a huge drop in numbers in people using our service. I've been here since 2012 and this is the lowest it has been in that time.'

In February 2020, just before the pandemic began, the service made more than 400 return journeys - taking residents into town for shopping trips or to essential medical appointments. Two years later, in February 2022, that number was at less than 200. They currently employ six paid staff, with an additional three volunteers. Mr Clarke warned that the workforce may have to be cut before ultimately shutting down entirely if passenger numbers do not increase in the coming weeks and months. 'It's definitely a very strong concern,' said the 35-year-old. It will certainly mean reducing the size of the operation to a point that we can manage and sustain. 'At this point we haven't made any staffing reductions but how long we can stay like this, we are unsure. There's a very good chance we won't be here in a few years' time if things don't pick up.'

For many residents in more remote areas of south Norfolk and north Suffolk, which have seen traditional bus services cut in recent years, Borderhoppa provides their only way of getting into the towns of Diss, Harleston, Long Stratton and Eye. 'Although there are other community transport services, we are the only one working in Diss and Harleston,' said Mr Clarke. 'Given the price of taxis, people will struggle to get around without us here. There's a lot of villages with quite poor bus services at the moment, and some people are contacting us to say we are the only way they can get out. People are more cut off than they ever have been and whilst we are trying to get them back out and into daily life, it's incredibly difficult.'



Council officials also stressed the crucial role the service plays within the community. South Norfolk councillor Alison Thomas said: 'Borderhoppa provides a vital community transport service to the residents of South Norfolk who have no access to other forms of transport. Without it, residents would be unable to manage important daily tasks such as attending medical appointments, shopping or to participate in social events which are important in helping to reduce social isolation.' Martin Wilby, Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure

and Transport at Norfolk County Council, added: 'As a local councillor I know how much this valued service means to people as it connects them to shops, services, friends and family. If people haven't used this excellent service before, I'd urge them to find out more and give it a try.' Several bus services throughout the county have been reduced or removed since the beginning of the pandemic. Under its 'Bus Back Better' plans, Norfolk County Council has partnered with bus operators to improve accessibility, cut fares for under 25s and make more frequent links for services over the next five years."

<https://www.dissexpress.co.uk/news/community-bus-service-on-the-brink-of-going-under-9244333/>

Nottinghamshire - Hucknall and Newstead Groups to Get Slice of New £1.2 Million County Council Community Funding Pot

Hucknall Dispatch: "More than 80 community groups and charities will receive grants to help fund essential running costs and to improve local facilities...Ravenshead Community Transport will receive £10,492 to continue to provide community transport to Blidworth, Ravenshead & the surrounding area, with particular emphasis on supporting independence and social interaction for older, less mobile, and more vulnerable residents. Funding will go towards fuel, maintenance of vehicle and staff costs. The funding for all the successful groups was approved by the council's communities committee. Coun John Cottee (Con), committee chairman, said: 'We're delighted to announce the first round of funding for this rolling programme of support. We hope it will provide a vital boost to organisations which gave much-needed help to people during the pandemic. Through this new fund, our aim is to make it easier for these wonderful groups to access the support they need to continue their work to encourage healthy and thriving communities. I'm proud that more than £1 million of this first batch of funding has been allocated to specifically help well-established community groups. Funding these longer-term projects is essential to get communities back on their feet, particularly those hardest-hit by the pandemic, including those suffering from loneliness and mental health issues.'



<https://www.hucknalldispatch.co.uk/news/people/hucknall-and-newstead-groups-to-get-slice-of-ps12m-council-community-funding-pot-3604680>

The same fund has benefitted two other CT operators, as reported by West Bridgford Wire: "Ashfield & Mansfield Voluntary & Community Transport will receive £27,250 towards a scheme for people who are unable to use public transport. Funding will contribute to insurance, vehicle and staff costs...Our Centre, based in Kirkby in Ashfield, where £20,000 will be used towards the cost of replacing a community minibus..."

<https://westbridgfordwire.com/nottinghamshire-community-groups-share-1-2-million-communities-fund/>

Ealing Community Transport - New General Manager Fayyaz Dar Shares his Aims & Priorities as he Starts in New Role

ECT website: "ECT has always been open to new ideas and we've grown through the good times as well as learning from the challenges we've faced. But we've also always made sure our passengers come first, and we always go that extra mile to make sure our service is second to none. We are therefore delighted to be able to introduce Fayyaz Dar as our new General Manager in Ealing. He will be a familiar face to many of our passengers and staff as he has been one of our drivers for over 7 years. During that time he has covered all the services we provide in West London, and now intends to use that experience to further improve our services to passengers.



Fayyaz is clear on his priorities. He shares ECT's belief that we are more than just a transport 'solution' and that customer service should always be at the forefront of everything we do. As he says, 'Being respectful, courteous and cooperative is the best way to make sure our passengers are happy'. He also believes that our staff need to be involved as we make decisions. They are the ones who are out there representing ECT, driving buses, answering phones and helping our passengers every single day. They are customer 'carers', trusted companions and represent the face of

ECT whatever the role we are delivering. With a long career in international logistics and customer service – as well as a career break during which he project managed the building of his own home – he intends to use all his skills to make sure our passengers, partners and clients all see improvements in everything we do.

Fayyaz says his aim is to 'see ECT providing services to the community for a long time to come. I want to leave ECT with my head held high and to be proud that together we have all made a real difference'. Fayyaz takes on the role from Piotr Chodzko-Zajko, who is stepping into a new role to help us expand the training we offer. Piotr was instrumental in ensuring ECT supported some of the most isolated groups throughout the worst period of the pandemic. We thank him not only for his dedication but are also so pleased he will remain a part of the team. John Chesters, CEO of ECT commented, 'We are delighted to welcome Fayyaz to this new role and are confident he will continue to see us develop new opportunities and partnerships to expand our impact. There is little doubt Fayyaz will be a key part of our aim to make a difference for everyone in Ealing.'

<https://ectcharity.co.uk/news/story/new-general-manager-fayyaz-dar-shares-his-aims-priorities-for-ect-as-he-starts-in-new-role>

Loughborough - 'Dial A Ride' Seeks Volunteer Drivers to Transport Elderly Residents

In Your Area: "A Loughborough charity has called for drivers at its 'Dial a Ride' service, transporting the elderly and vulnerable to appointments. John Storer Charnwood is searching for friendly, reassuring and good drivers, who may be retired, work shifts or have free time. Dial a Ride drivers use their personal cars, with 45p per mile allowance paid, or one of the service's vehicles to transport Charnwood residents to their GP, chiropodist, dentist, hairdresser or social events. Long-term volunteer Richard said: 'Volunteering for JSH is very rewarding, as it keeps me busy and helps the elderly and disabled to retain their independence. It also gives me a reason to get up and out of the house and keep going.'



John Storer requires volunteers with patience, confidence, safe driving skills, and a sense of humour. The role requires a new enhanced DBS disclosure, carried out free for volunteers. Drivers can choose the days and hours they would like to volunteer, and John Storer will supply any necessary PPE. The charity said friendly staff help the drivers with directions and share a cup of tea. To find out more, call Candi Barnes or Joanne Clarke on 01509 631750, email, or visit John Storer House."

<https://www.inyourarea.co.uk/news/loughborough-dial->

[a-ride-seeks-volunteer-drivers-to-transport-elderly-residents/](#)

Worcestershire - Pershore Volunteers Raise £44k for New Electric Vehicle

Evesham Journal: "Volunteers in Pershore have raised over £40,000 to buy a new electric vehicle. The Pershore Volunteer Centre have hit their target of £44,000 to buy a new wheelchair accessible vehicle, thanks to the generosity of local residents and businesses. The vehicle has now been ordered and is set to arrive on April 6. A spokesperson of the Volunteer Centre said: 'Thank you to all the businesses and individuals that helped make this a reality, because of the generosity of so many we will now be able to reach more people in our community that are unable get out and about. Pershore and District Volunteer Centre can continue to help strengthen the local community and ensure that play a full and active part in their community. We are particularly grateful for the support of the Foresters Friendly Society in Pershore for pulling out all the stops to make a generous donation in time to meet the Crowdfunding target.'

The Centre has seen a surge in demand for its social car scheme since the pandemic began. This, partnered with a plea to restart the Lunch Club for older, vulnerable, members of society, prompted the Centre to launch the appeal. The waiting list for the Lunch Club increased by 120 per cent during the pandemic and so it is hoped this new vehicle will help transport people to the event, as well as being used for other social activities around Pershore and neighbouring villages."



<https://www.eveshamjournal.co.uk/news/19994842.pershore-volunteers-raise-44k-new-electric-vehicle/#gallery0>

Lincolnshire - Thanks to Spalding and Cowbit Voluntary Car Driver



Spalding Today – Letter from Angela Newton: “After 10 years of sterling service as the Spalding driver/co-ordinator for the South Holland Parish Voluntary Car Service (SHPVCS), Iris Landen retires at the end of January. Drivers and patients using the service will all be very sorry to see Iris retire but realise all good things have to come to an end. Iris has been a fantastic helper to our car service and has given many hours’ voluntary service each week to residents in our area. Often taking calls at extremely unsociable hours to help out some of the passengers who get offered short notice appointments. Many weeks Iris has taken over 100 calls from residents enquiring if we can help with transport in the Spalding and Cowbit areas alone, which then necessitates contacting our pool of volunteer drivers.

The SHPVCS Committee sincerely thank Iris for the friendly and helpful way she has worked with us, our drivers and passengers over the years. We would like to publicly acknowledge the significant efforts that Iris has made on behalf of the Service. She will be sorely missed by us all. Roger Bates has volunteered to take over the role from February 1 and will work the same hours as Iris, 9am to noon and 2-4pm Mondays to Fridays. We are also delighted to announce that Andy Bunce has kindly agreed to provide back-up for Roger in times of need (holidays etc). Roger can be contacted on 07746238561. As always, we would be delighted to hear if anybody would like to join our small pool of volunteer drivers, right across South Holland. You don’t have to offer a set amount of time each week. Some drivers are able to do one journey a week; some are happy to be available more often. There are no set hours. Drivers are reimbursed 50p per mile and DBS checks are funded via the Service. Please contact me if you want further information. Coun Angela Newton South Holland Parish Voluntary Car Service chairman, tel: 07939559764.”

<https://www.spaldingtoday.co.uk/news/thanks-to-retiring-voluntary-car-driver-9236584/>

Rochdale - Volunteer Drivers Service wins Contract to Continue for Next Three Years

In Your Area: “HMR Circle’s volunteer drivers service has been awarded the contract for the next three years to continue helping older residents across Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale. The volunteer drivers help older residents get to their hospital or doctor’s appointments and even deliver meals, craft packs and shopping to people in their homes. During the pandemic the service was also crucial in helping those residents who were shielding. Subsequently the service won the Community Transport Association Volunteer Car Scheme of the Year for its outstanding response to the Covid pandemic. Now, Rochdale Adult Care has awarded HMR Circle a three-year contract to continue the drivers service following a tender process.

Started four years ago, this is the first time the Circle has been awarded a contract longer than one year. HMR Circle volunteer drivers service coordinator Mary Burke said: ‘We are really pleased to have been awarded the contract to run the ‘VDS’ for at least another three years. The positive improvements and changes we have been able to implement since being under the HMR Circle banner has seen the service help even more people especially during the pandemic. To win a national award and now to be awarded the contract for at least another three years is certainly the icing on the cake.’ HMR Circle also hosts activities such as group walks, quizzes, social outings, but also help with a dinner service alongside the volunteer drivers.



Last year, the service received a certificate from the former Mayor of Rochdale Billy Sheerin in recognition of their efforts during the pandemic. HMR Circle Director, Mark Wynn, said that it was a 'very rigorous' tender process but is glad the service will be able to continue helping residents for next few years. He said: 'I want to thank Mary and the team in the office for their fantastic work and also to Rochdale Adult Care for again putting their faith in the HMR Circle volunteer drivers service. But the biggest thank you has to go to our fabulous Volunteer Drivers who go above and beyond every day, supporting older people and vulnerable adults to stay connected.'

<https://www.inyourarea.co.uk/news/rochdale-volunteer-drivers-service-wins-contract-to-continue-for-next-three-years/>

Ross and Cromarty – New Community Bus Launches in Ferintosh Community Council Area to Provide Door-to-Door Service on the Black Isle

Ross-Shire Journal: "Culbokie character Allan Forsyth, for whom bus travel is a lifeline, was guest of honour at the launch of a new flexible door-to-door bus service on the Black Isle. Allan was delighted to accept an invite by Ferintosh Community Council to join local MSP Kate Forbes at a ceremony in the Findon Hall, Culbokie, to mark the opening of the Wee Ferintosh Bus Service, which makes it easier for local residents to get about their community and connect to commercial scheduled bus services. Allan received a special certificate from Ms Forbes for not only being the first local resident to use the bus but for offering such helpful feedback on the operation and timetable of the service.



Allan does not drive and is dependent on bus transport to get about, including to his work in Inverness with Tesco, who kindly granted him a day's paid leave to attend. Alison Lowe of Ferintosh Community Council said: 'Allan's interest, support, help and loyalty to bus services over many years has been recognised by all of us in the community and very much appreciated. It was no surprise to any of us that Allan was the first resident to take the opportunity to try out the new flexible service offered by the Wee Ferintosh Community Bus. We wish Allan many more happy journeys in the future.' Ms Forbes said: 'Despite being close to Dingwall as well as

two major trunk road routes, in recent years this part of the Black Isle has not been particularly well-served with bus links. It is to the community's credit for coming up with such an enterprising scheme, and I hope it will be well-used by local residents. I wouldn't be surprised if it becomes a model that will be adopted by other Highland communities facing similar challenges in rural areas. I was delighted to be at the launch and trust the project will be a success.'

The demand-responsive service follows a successful pilot in the community. It allows permanent and temporary residents in the Ferintosh Community Council area to book journeys within the Black Isle - to and from their homes. The bus is a 6-seater, wheelchair accessible, all electric multi-purpose vehicle which is available between 9.30 am – 4 pm, Monday to Friday. With effect during March 2022, the Ferintosh Community Bus will be available during the days and evenings, 7 days a week. To book, users should telephone between 10am and 2pm, Monday to Friday at least 1 day in advance of a journey, although every effort will be made to accommodate same day requests. For the Monday to Friday daytime service, phone numbers are 07519 722456 or 07519 772376. For other journeys (from March 2022) the

contact number is 07387 364541. The pay structure is 'pay what you can' for any Black Isle destinations, with a recommended £2 return fare (cash only)..."

<https://www.ross-shirejournal.co.uk/news/community-bus-service-launches-on-black-isle-267472/>

See also: https://www.highland.gov.uk/news/article/14411/black_isle_community_to_celebrate_launch_of_door-to-door_bus_service

Wales - 'Extend Cardigan Town Bus Service to Pick-up School Kids'

Tivyside Advertiser: "A Cardigan town councillor believes a re-routing of an existing bus service to collect primary schoolchildren from the southern end of town would be the 'easiest solution' to the current school transport headache. Members have previously voiced concern that children living on estates such as Ridgeway and Golwg-y-Castell had lost their bus transport to school during the pandemic. They also expressed dissatisfaction at reports that parents were being forced to accompany pupils on the long walk to school in all weathers with children occasionally having to sit through the long school day wearing wet clothes.

Now Cllr Catrin Miles has proposed that the existing town service operated by Richards Bros could extend its run, head down to the bottom end of town and bus youngsters into school. 'The obvious answer would be to get the town service to turn left coming out of Station Road and pick up at Ridgeway and Golwg before turning round and going through town,' she told colleagues. 'That, to me, would appear to be the easiest solution.' Cllr Miles revealed that she had recently walked the route to Cardigan Junior School with county council officers. 'It's quite a walk and took a good twenty minutes,' she said. 'The actual distance may not be that far but there's quite a challenging hill en-route for four and five-year-old legs.'

Meanwhile, Caroline Wilson, manager of the Green Dragon Bus Service has suggested the purchase of an electric-powered minibus to carry out the Cardigan school run. Cllr Morvenna Richards said that while she backed the idea in principle, the town would have to install more electric power points if such a scheme was to become a reality. Cllr Yvonne O'Neill – who herself works as a driver on the community bus service – agreed an electric-powered minibus was a good idea. 'The problem is I do not see how we are going to fund such a service,' she added. 'The fact is we need a bus for the school run and we need someone to drive it. A scheme like the one suggested is bound cost a lot of money.'



<https://www.tivysideadvertiser.co.uk/news/19965992.extend-cardigan-town-bus-service-pick-school-kids/>

Highlands - Liftango Partners with HITRANS to Provide Demand-Response Transit Services

Mass Transit: "The services in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland will address inequity and a lack of transport options to rural areas. The Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (HITRANS), a regional transport organization in the North of Scotland, has joined forces with on-demand shared transport company, Liftango, to provide sustainable and accessible transit services to residents in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. This strategic partnership will leverage Demand-Responsive Transport (DRT) software to combat transport inequality, reduced funding and a lack of commercial trips to rural areas of the country. 'Digital technology such as Liftango's is helping us to deliver more equitable transport across the region. The flexibility and convenience of the Dynamic DRT it provides stood out. We look forward to the ongoing partnership as we roll out services across our partner Local Authorities and Fleet Operators,' said HITRANS Partnership Manager Neil MacRae. The vast majority of public transport on Scotland's islands does not operate on a commercial basis. Commercial services are restricted to a few of the larger settlements and some longer distance arterial

routes on the mainland. Public and community transport is almost entirely supported through a mix of services contracted by local authorities or volunteers, with some grants coming from the local or central government.



The cost of providing these services is high and funding has not been growing to match this. The COVID-19 pandemic, the current level of public transport and the existing model have only increased these challenges. 'We see our platform being able to help bring transport to the communities across the Highlands and Islands. Flexibility and availability of transport options have been a challenge over the years for many of the region's residents. They will now be able to access equitable transport services by making

advanced or last-minute on-demand bookings at a time most suitable to their schedules,' said Head of Liftango Europe David Mawhinney.

In response to these challenges, HITRANS and Liftango have collaborated to roll out DRT services to the local authorities and fleet operators in the region. The rollout will allow multiple operators to independently administer their services exclusively through a single digital platform provided by Liftango. These services range from fully DRT services within specific or flexible geography on designated days to hybrid services that operate on a pre-booking model and serve particular destinations. HITRANS and Liftango will be facilitating sustainable transport in the region by improving access to transit and resolving transport inequality for residents in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland."

<https://www.masstransitmag.com/alt-mobility/shared-mobility/press-release/21260632/liftango-liftango-partners-with-hitrans-to-provide-demandresponse-transit-services>



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