



Community & Voluntary Transport at



The TAS Partnership Limited
Passenger Transport Specialists

Newsletter No.25 October 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/>

CTA – Remembering Queen Elizabeth II

CTA: “Share your memories of Queen Elizabeth II in our online Book of Condolence. The Queen was Patron for over 500 organisations in her lifetime, from charities and military associations to professional bodies and public service organisations. Supporting and encouraging public and voluntary service through Patronages was one of the most important aspects of The Queen’s work. At CTA we know that many of you will have memories or reflections you would like to share. We would encourage you to do so by leaving a message in our online Book of Condolence. If you would like to share any images or photos we will be creating a gallery, send images to comms@ctauk.org please ensure you have permission for any images to be shared.”

<https://ctauk.org/remembering-queen-elizabeth-ii/>



UK – MiDAS Transformation Project

We are inviting recipients of this CT Newsletter to contribute to a survey about the Minibus Drivers Awareness Scheme (MiDAS), which is currently undergoing a major revamp. As you probably know, MiDAS is a well-respected and leading training scheme with a 25-year track record in training drivers and passenger assistants in inclusive and safe practice and upholding standards in the community transport sector. A programme to refresh and transform

MiDAS and PATS (Passenger Assistant Training Scheme) has been initiated through a partnership of the Community Transport Association and Hampshire County Council with Motability. Motability, as a leading disability charity, is investing in the community transport sector to help make it more resilient and be more able to support the transport needs of the disabled community. The TAS Partnership Ltd has also been engaged as part of the delivery team. The transformation will update the content, improve the learning media and support systems and redevelop the brand. As part of this process we need to understand more about the current standing of MiDAS, what it represents to stakeholders such as yourself, how it is understood and valued and its current benefits and limitations. This initial survey relates to MiDAS for minibus drivers. Further research around PATS and MiDAS for Cars/MPVs may be circulated later. CTA is also circulating the survey link to its members, so many of our contacts will receive it twice – if this is the case please complete the survey only once! The survey link is here: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/tasmidas> and is also provided in the covering email for this newsletter.



Worcestershire - Teme Wheels in Tenbury is Showing the Future for Community Transport

Ludlow Advertiser: "A Community transport group in Tenbury is showing the way to the future. The work of Teme Wheels is being watched to see if it provides a blueprint that can be followed by other communities. Formed two years ago by John Driver, who was formerly the chair of the Community Transport Trust that also serves the local community, the group set out to pioneer the use of electric vehicles. The group has also introduced a scheme to help tackle loneliness by enabling people to book a ride with a driver to beauty spots and other places of interest. Recently, Teme Wheels was visited by Councillor Mike Rouse, lead in developing community transport services for Worcestershire County Council. Also seeing what the group is doing was Harriett Baldwin MP, whose West Worcestershire constituency includes Tenbury.

'Community Transport schemes like Teme Wheels are playing an increasingly important role helping people to get out and about and I had a detailed conversation with Councillor Mike Rouse, who is responsible for the county's transport provision because community transport will play an increasing role in the future,' said Mrs Baldwin. 'I was particularly impressed that John Driver has been able to source an electric vehicle for Teme Wheels and this future thinking is just what we need as we work towards our nation's net zero ambitions.'



Teme Wheels operates an electric SUV that has been adapted to be able to take a wheelchair. The vehicle was purchased with match funding following fund raising in the local community that raised the £20,000 needed for the project to go ahead. There were problems sourcing the SUV because of the global shortage of electronic chips that are needed in modern vehicles. Converting the vehicle for wheelchairs was also delayed because of a strike at a factory in Italy that supplies components." More here: <https://www.ludlowadvertiser.co.uk/news/20606268.teme-wheels-tenbury-showing-future-community-transport/>

Worcestershire - Technology to Unlock County Bus Network Welcomed by MP



Evesham Observer: "Town MP Harriett Baldwin has welcomed plans to use technology to boost the county's community bus network. Private bus operators have been withdrawing from services across Worcestershire leaving commuters and shoppers left without reliable public transport options. But the West Worcestershire MP met with County Councillor Mike Rouse to hear about plans to roll out a mobile phone application which will allow people to access bus services on demand. The technology will mean the thriving community transport network will be able to access the market, increasing choice for local people. Worcestershire County Council is trialling the technology in Bromsgrove before rolling it out to the whole county.

'I have been complaining about bus service provision for many years but this issue has been exacerbated by the pandemic and seriously declining demand for bus services,' Mrs Baldwin said. 'People are not popping back onto the bus and I hope the use of innovative technological solutions will help stimulate more demand. I'm also keen to see more support for the community transport network, which plays an important role helping vulnerable groups of people to get out and about. In recent weeks I have met with two thriving community transport schemes and it is clear to me they have capacity to grow. I hope that they will be able to exploit this opportunity in the market which is currently being ignored by the large bus operators. If we are to achieve our net zero ambitions, we must look to use our private cars less and opt for cleaner, greener solutions,' she added.

<https://www.eveshamobserver.co.uk/news/technology-to-unlock-county-network-welcomed-by-mp-40659/>

Herefordshire – Ledbury Town Council Agrees to Help fund New Town Bus Service

Ledbury Reporter: "Campaigners fighting for a new community bus service in Ledbury are delighted after the town council agreed to fund it. Discussions have been ongoing about a new service running from Ledbury to Ross-on-Wye via Newent for some time. At a meeting on August 18, Ledbury Town Council voted to give a grant of £24,000 to go towards running the service, which was proposed by Buses4Us. In addition to the LTC grant, Herefordshire Council and Gloucestershire Council are putting forward a combined £70,000, with Newent Town Council also set to make its own contribution. It is hoped Ross on Wye Town Council will also vote to support the service.

The previous 132 bus service from Ledbury was axed in February by Stagecoach. Buses4Us, a group of residents, bus users and business owners that banded together following the cancellation of the 132, has already helped to launch one new bus service. The 632 runs a twice-weekly shopper service taking passengers from Dymock, Gorsley and Kilcot to Newent. It started on April 27 - exactly two months after the last Stagecoach 132 from Newent to Ledbury.



Clare Stone, from Buses4Us, said the decision was a step in the right direction, but added there was still "some way to go" before everything could be set up formally. She said: 'It is good news, but there is still a way to go. The next step will be for Ross Town Council to vote, they are the last of the three councils. If they agree to take part, that will show all three towns are fully supportive and fully behind the plan. After that, we would have to put together a full business plan and get it all set up. This is hugely important for the town and some of the most

vulnerable people in the community. On top of that, it is better for the climate and can help people struggling to run a car due to the cost of living. Ledbury stands to gain a lot from this, so we are optimistic.”

<https://www.ledburyreporter.co.uk/news/20681701.ledbury-town-council-agrees-fund-new-town-bus-service/>

Hertfordshire - New Door-to-door Bus Service Launched to Help People with Mobility Issues

Three Rivers Council: “A door-to-door shopper bus service designed to help people with mobility issues across Three Rivers has been launched. Three Rivers District Council, in partnership with Hertfordshire-based voluntary and community organisation Communities 1st, is providing the low floor minibus designed for wheelchair users and people who have difficulties with steps. The fully accessible, door to door service to major supermarkets in the local area provides a more sociable, low cost alternative to taxi/private hire journeys for those who face challenges in using standard public transport.

Cllr Paul Rainbow, Lead Member for Transport and Economic Development, said: ‘Everyone should have easy access to bus services to the shops across our district, whatever their circumstances. We hope this new service will prove to be a big help the people who need it and I am delighted that we are working with Communities 1st to make this happen.’ Volunteer shopper bus buddies can also assist with shopping in store, fetching items, carrying bags and help with boarding on and off the bus. Stephen Craker, Chief Executive of Communities 1st, said: ‘We are delighted to extend our friendly, reliable and convenient, doorstep service for residents across the district of Three Rivers. This will help people who have restricted mobility, or care for a person who has, are unable to use public transport or who may be isolated due to their out-of-town location to access to stores selling a wider range of supplies than they can get locally.’

The service costs £6 for a door to door return journey and £2 extra with a carer. The bus operates four days a week covering the following areas:

- J Monday: South Oxhey & Carpenders Park to Tesco (Watford)
- J Tuesday: Abbots Langley, Bedmond & Leavesden to Asda and Sainsbury's (Watford) Saratt, Chandler's Cross, Loudwater & Croxley Green to Waitrose and Tesco (Rickmansworth)
- J Thursday: Rickmansworth, Moor Park, & Mill End to Waitrose and Tesco (Rickmansworth) South Oxhey, Carpenders Park to Waitrose and Tesco (Rickmansworth)
- J Friday: Chorleywood, Maple Cross, & West Hyde to Waitrose and Tesco (Rickmansworth) Rickmansworth, Moor Park & Mill End to Waitrose and Tesco (Rickmansworth)



For more information please visit: www.communities1st.org.uk/shopper To sign up for the shopper bus service, email Communities 1st at: travel@communities1st.org.uk. Or call on: 01727 649980 between 9.30am - 4pm, Mon-Fri.”

<https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/news/shopper-bus>

Staffordshire – Warning Lichfield and Burntwood Voluntary Transport Service could Close after more than Half a Century

Lichfield Live: “A transport service supporting disabled and elderly people across Lichfield and Burntwood is on the brink of closure due to a shortage of volunteers. Voluntary Transport for the Disabled was formed in 1970 to help local people to attend functions who

might otherwise not be able to make it to them. The service expanded and became a charity in 1972. It has since evolved and runs three accessible buses with tail lifts. But after 50 years of service, the group could disband.



A spokesperson said: 'This service would appear to have been appreciated in the Lichfield and Burntwood area as we have, until recently, been quite busy. The situation has changed dramatically in the last two or three years though, with passenger numbers falling mainly due to the effects of Covid. In order for the charity to continue its work we desperately need volunteers to administer the charity, organisations to use our vehicles and volunteers to drive them.' The minibuses seat up to 16 passengers and allow a door-to-door service for most users who cannot easily access public transport.

'Without the volunteers and organisations to use our buses, the people and organisations within the district and surrounding areas must ask themselves do they need this facility and are they prepared to support it? If not, after some 50 years the local community transport scheme is heading for extinction.' For more details about the group, call 01543 686321." <https://lichfieldlive.co.uk/2022/08/16/warning-lichfield-and-burntwood-voluntary-transport-service-could-close-after-more-than-half-a-century/>

Greater London - Community Bus Serving Islington and Hackney Cancelled after Surging Fuel Prices

Islington Gazette: "A community bus serving Islington and Hackney will cease running on August 26 after the operator cited financial difficulties. Route 812, known as Plus Bus, runs between Bridport Place and Hoxton and Bath Street near Old Street and is operated by Hackney Community Transport (HCT). HCT said commercial losses due to financial difficulties before the pandemic, the impact of Covid-19 itself and a recent surge in fuel prices were behind the decision.



Lynn McClelland, HCT group chief executive, said: 'It's a sad day for all of us at HCT Group. We understand just how important these services are for the people that use them and it is the last thing we want to do, but sadly, we see no alternative.' Route 812 is a community-designed route with the specific purpose to help older and disabled people to get around. Islington Council helps to fund Route 812 and said it will review how it can best support customers in the future. The council cannot run

the route itself as it does not have a Transport for London operating licence, appropriate vehicles or drivers.

Councillor Rowena Champion, Islington Council's executive member for transport, said: 'It's a huge loss and very sad, that Hackney Community Transport is having to stop this service because of the impact of Covid-19 and the cost-of-living crisis. We know this will have a direct impact on local people and we will review how best we can help and support users now and in the future.' The cancellation comes after Transport for London (TfL) announced proposals for widespread cuts, including the 4, 56, 43, 135, 205, 254, 259 and 476 buses, along with plans to re-route the 214. In total, 250 buses and 16 routes across London could be removed from service as a result of the review.

HCT was originally founded in 1982 when 30 local community groups in Hackney pooled their vehicle resources, providing low-cost minibuses to help the local community. The social enterprise also provides minibus rental, minibus driver training and mobility scooters. Those concerned about the cancellation's impact on their health and wellbeing can contact We Are Islington helpline on 0207 527 8222."

<https://www.islingtongazette.co.uk/news/traffic/community-bus-cancelled-9210510>

Bristol - Community Transport Bus Firm to Stop Trading amid Cost of Living Crisis

ITV: "A company that runs dozens of bus routes in and around Bristol, including the M1 metrobus route, will stop running all of its community services this week. Bristol Community Transport will stop all of its community-based operations from Friday (26 August) after its parent company, the HCT Group, ran into financial difficulties. This includes all Dial-a-Ride and minibus groups which offer a vital lifeline to members of the community. The organisation say they have around 700 regular users, most of which are vulnerable, elderly or disabled. ITV News understands key services like the MetroBus M1 will be taken over by First Bus

In a statement, it said: 'It's a sad day for all of us at HCT Group. We understand just how important these services are for the people that use them and it is the last thing we wanted to do. The move follows a period where we have been rocked by multiple challenges – a period of difficult trading prior to the pandemic, the financial impact of the pandemic itself, followed immediately by the current surge in fuel prices and the cost-of-living crisis. This has led to a position where continued delivery of these services is unsustainable. We have tried to the very last minute to find an alternative operator for these services, but sadly, we have been unsuccessful, which means these services will now come to an end.'



Dial-a-Ride provides door-to-door service and can be used to travel anywhere in Bristol for any purpose, including to shopping locations, GP surgeries, hospitals and community centres. This will result in 10 job losses on the community side, however, it's understood that a plan is in place to ensure the Metrobus M1 route connecting south Bristol, the city centre and Cribbs Causeway will be taken over by First Bus.

A spokesperson for First West of England said: 'The M1 service is operated by HCT under contract with First and we expect the service to remain operating. We recognise this is an important route for Bristol and we will take all necessary steps to ensure that it remains so.' A Department for Transport spokesperson told ITV News West Country: 'Community transport operators play a crucial role in connecting people and we continue to support their vital work, with more than £2bn funding going to bus operators and local authorities since March 2020 to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic.'

<https://www.itv.com/news/westcountry/2022-08-23/bristol-bus-firm-to-stop-trading-amid-cost-of-living-crisis>

Further coverage of this story is here:

<https://www.bristolworld.com/news/dial-a-ride-and-community-minibuses-in-bristol-axed-while-big-question-marks-hang-over-a-dozen-bus-routes-3816813>

<https://www.bristol247.com/news-and-features/news/lifeline-community-bus-services-suddenly-axed/>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-bristol-62650568>

<https://www.route-one.net/news/bristol-community-transport-ceases-all-operations/>

<https://www.somersetlive.co.uk/news/somerset-news/somerset-villages-hit-devastating-new-7575800>

Northumberland - Tarmac Secures Future of Community Bus Service

Agg-Net: "Tarmac's Harden Quarry, in Biddlestone, Northumberland, has pledged its support to a local community transport provider, enabling it to continue its service to people in the area. Based in Rothbury, Upper Coquetdale Community Transport (UCCT) uses a minibus and a hybrid car to transport elderly people and those attending local clubs and schools around the Coquet valley, county and beyond. From assisting people with shopping, to getting them to medical appointments, the service has become a much-valued part of the community. To ensure the charity can continue with its vital service, Tarmac have donated £24,000, which will provide three years' support for the charity, securing its operation and making sure local people can continue to call on it.

Harden quarry manager Gareth Williams, who presented the cheque, said: 'Tarmac are committed to supporting the communities around their operations. At Harden Quarry we saw the valuable service provided by UCCT and felt that it was something we really wanted to support.' John Lazarus, chair of the trustees at UCCT, said: 'Tarmac's donation is very generous and will be an immense help to our charity. The funding means our volunteer drivers can continue to offer people the flexible transport they need in what are very difficult times.'

<https://www.agg-net.com/news/tarmac-secure-future-of-community-bus-service>



Wales - Drivers Wanted to Support Bridgend Community Transport

Wales247: "Bridgend Community Transport is seeking to recruit new drivers who are able to support their services across a range of volunteer and paid positions. As a local charity, Bridgend Community Transport supports residents of Bridgend County Borough who may not have access to other transport by providing a range of alternative services. The Town Rider helps residents to maintain their independence and carry out daily or weekly tasks such as shopping, socialising, attending medical appointments and more. Available Monday to Friday between the hours of 8:30am and 4.30pm, the Town Rider is designed to offer an affordable door-to-door service which also accepts bus passes as part of the All-Wales Concessionary Travel Bus Pass scheme.

The service does not run on a strict timetable, is subject to availability and must be booked in advance. Drivers ensure that passengers get on and off the vehicle safely and even help carry shopping to their door. With an annual growth in passenger numbers of between 10-15 per cent each year, the Town Rider service is becoming an increasingly popular way of getting around. With a fleet of fully accessible minibuses, Bridgend Community Transport also provides services for voluntary and community groups as well as for individuals with specific mobility requirements.



Graham Cartwright, Operations Manager at Bridgend Community Transport, said: 'We are particularly interested in hearing from people who hold licences for driving minibuses, but we

also provide full training to all of our staff and volunteers.’ Councillor John Spanswick, Cabinet Member for Communities: ‘Bridgend Community Transport provides local communities throughout Bridgend County Borough with an extremely valuable service that makes a real difference to residents who may not otherwise be able to get around. This kind of service relies on its users to make it viable and I am delighted to see how successful it has been since it was launched back in 2014. I hope that it continues to flourish and support vulnerable local residents.’ If you want to find out more about how you can support Bridgend Community Transport by becoming a local driver, visit bridgendcommunitytransport.co.uk or call (01656) 669665.”

<https://www.wales247.co.uk/drivers-wanted-to-support-bridgend-community-transport>

Wales – Disabled Woman feels ‘Cast Aside Like an Old Boot’ by Lack of Bus Service

Wales Online: “A woman with mobility issues said she feels ‘marooned’ in her area of Cardiff, having been without a bus service on her main road for three years. Residents living on Lake Road West in Cyncoed have been without a bus service - what used to be the old Cardiff Bus number 28 route - since 2019. The number 54 route, which also used to run along Lake Road West, no longer operates. Most residents living on the road running next to Roath Park Lake will make the walk northwards to the bus stop by Cardiff High School if they want to catch a bus into town. However, Sian Davies who lives just off Lake Road West finds it nearly impossible to make the walk due to her mobility issues. Sian, 64, said: ‘I have looked at the alternatives, which would be the train from Heath High Level, but there is no disabled access. It makes me feel completely worthless. I have been cast aside like an old boot. If I was a cyclist I would have so many options open to me, but my cycling days are gone because of my disability.’ Sian said she goes into town to get medication, do her shopping and meet friends among other activities...”



She recently expressed concern over what she sees as certain members of society being left behind when it comes to transport in Cardiff. She said: ‘Having an inclusive, reliable and sustainable transport system in the capital is key to the success of the city in terms of its economy, growth and environmental benefits and equally importantly for the social mobility, equality and wellbeing of the city’s people.’ Cardiff Bus commercial director Gareth Stevens said: ‘As part of service changes back in 2019 we revised how buses operate in the Lakeside area. We routed all services via Lake

Road East and Lakeside Drive to maintain the 30-minute service in this area as part of Lakeside sees the regular usage, which we need to operate our services. We have discussed options with local councillors and we are aware this has been discussed with Cardiff Council. Cardiff Council has the remit to support bus services that are not financially viable but are socially necessary and in prior discussion have posed some possible alternatives for their consideration.’

A Cardiff Council spokesperson said: ‘Unfortunately, under current legislation the council is unable to provide a subsidised service on routes where a bus operator already runs a commercial route as it would compete with that operator. Residents that are not serviced by a bus route can, however, call the door-to-door service ‘dial-a-ride’. This is one of the ways we support community transport for people who struggle to access public transport. Residents can register for the dial-a-ride service on the phone by ringing 029 20 490325. Once they are registered they can then make a booking to use the service at a cost of 80p for the 1st mile and 30p per extra half mile. The dial-a-ride service can be used to access shopping, bingo,

medical practices, hair appointments etc. The service does not transport passengers to the hospital as there is separate patient transport that can be arranged by the Health board.”
<https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/disabled-woman-feels-cast-aside-24757813>

Wales – Lifelong Llanidloes Rugby Club Supporters Remembered with Charity Aid

County Times: “The families of two Llanidloes Rugby Club legends have presented £1,400 raised at a memorial match to two charities close to their hearts. Founder club member Billy Jones and former player Tudor Francis-Jones were remembered at an ‘overwhelming’ charity day on Saturday, April 30, which had a ‘great turnout’. Dial-A-Ride and St John’s Ambulance were each



presented with £700. Llanidloes Rugby Club said they were ‘honoured’ to invite Bill and Tudor’s families along with representatives from Dial-A-Ride and St John Ambulance Cymru last week. A spokesperson for St John Ambulance Cymru Llanidloes said: ‘Thank you to the families for choosing Llanidloes Division to receive such a generous donation. It really does help us to maintain the division and keep providing voluntary first aid cover for local events.’ Billy Jones was a founder member, President and Chairman of the rugby club who died aged 86 in July. The Club described him as a ‘great life-long supporter’. Tudor Francis-Jones sadly passed away in November 2020. He was 49 years old. Along with Llanidloes Rugby Club committee members, Betty Jones and Joanne Jones presented a cheque for £700 to Ian Brown of Llanidloes Dial A Ride and Hugh Francis-Jones, Angela Francis-Jones and James Francis-Jones handed over another cheque for £700 to Eleri Sargent of St John Ambulance Cymru.”

<https://www.countytimes.co.uk/news/20671466.lifelong-llanidloes-rugby-club-supporters-remembered-charity-aid/>

Wales - Dial-a-ride Donation from Brecon Floral Society



Brecon & Radnor Express: “Fund raising has been curtailed this year for Brecon Floral Society because of COVID, nevertheless members raised funds from sales of preserves, plants and an extra raffle at their afternoon tea in June. Brecon & District Disabled Club Dial-a-Ride were their chosen charity for the year and a cheque for £150 was recently presented by Ann Kinsey (Chairman of the Floral Society) to Lisa Marsh (General Manager). You don’t have to be a flower arranger, come along to our monthly demonstrations held in the Barn at Brynich on the last Thursday of each

month at 2.30pm for a relaxing afternoon and see area demonstrators producing an array of floral arrangements.” <https://www.brecon-radnor.co.uk/news/dial-a-ride-donation-from-brecon-floral-society-559180>

Northern Ireland – Community Transport: ‘It was a Reason to get up in the Morning’

BBC: “Community transport organisations in rural parts of Northern Ireland are being affected by rising fuel costs. About 40% of people in Northern Ireland live in rural areas and many rely on community transport to allow them to leave their homes. More than 100 volunteer drivers have left community transport in Northern Ireland since the beginning of this year. BBC News NI has spoken to elderly people in rural areas who have been affected as well as volunteers who have made the decision to leave because of fuel costs.” See video report in link below.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-northern-ireland-62665848>



Northern Ireland – Petrol Prices hit Community Transport Volunteers

Fermanagh Herald: “Elderly and vulnerable people in Fermanagh could miss out on hospital and GP appointments due to a lack of volunteer drivers. The Fermanagh Community Transport organisation (FCT) has long provided a service to people in rural areas who do not have the means or the ability to travel long distances to go to the doctor’s, the hospital or even to meet friends at social group meetings. To do this, the FCT’s own staff is complemented by a number of volunteers who give up their own time to give lifts to the elderly and vulnerable in return for having their petrol expenses covered. However, due to rising petrol costs, the expenses rates, which are set by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), being at the same level for a number of years, no longer cover the cost of a full tank of fuel – which has left many volunteers out of pocket and leaving their roles.



Jason Donaghy, the manager of FCT, said: ‘The volunteers very kindly and graciously give up their time to help us bring to folks what are basic and essential services. Pre-Covid, we would have had in the region of 20 volunteers. Now we’re operating with seven. Some of our volunteers have been saying to us if the price of petrol continues to go the way it’s going, the expenses that they get back wouldn’t cover their out-of-pocket expenses. For example, if someone was going from Enniskillen to

Belleek to bring someone to a hospital appointment, what they would be getting by way of allowable expenses under the HMRC simply wouldn’t cover the total cost of that journey. It’s not just the petrol that needs to be paid for. There’s also the wear and tear on the car, the maintenance and all the other things that go to keep a car running. A lot of the volunteers are retired folk who are on fixed incomes. In real terms, a lot of them are seeing their incomes decline. For anyone that’s in retirement and on a pension, it’s a big ask to ask anyone to continue to drive in the current (financial) climate. We know that volunteers deliver a third of our trips during the year. Before Covid, we had done 30,000 trips in a year. We take people to GP appointments, outpatient appointments, to go to the shops, go to day centres, senior citizens groups and so on.’

Donaghy states the FCT’s service is crucial for people who need it most as other options, such as hiring a taxi, would cost too much. He added: ‘If you compare the prices of say getting a taxi from Roslea or Belleek to the (SWAH) hospital, you could travel free or half fare –

depending on your circumstances. Taking a private taxi and getting there could consume a person's weekly benefits. We pay a rate of 45p per mile for travelling to pick someone up. When that someone is in your vehicle, the rate goes to 50p per mile. That has been in place for the last twelve years and has not been changed for HMRC to reflect inflation and other rising costs. We can't ask volunteers to absorb unreasonable costs. It's bit like me saying to you "can you go and pay your work's electric bills so that you can go into the office and do your job". We don't want to take advantage as we really do value and appreciate the work our volunteers do.' A spokesman for HM Treasury referred to the Department's position on all fiscal matters stating: 'The Treasury keeps all taxes under review.'

<https://fermanaghherald.com/2022/09/petrol-prices-hit-community-transport-volunteers/>

Republic of Ireland - Minister aims to Reduce 'Decades of Neglect' of Rural Transport

Agriland: "Minister for Transport Eamon Ryan has welcomed a wide-ranging discussion on the future of public rural transport in Ireland at the first Rural Ideas Forum of 2022. The event, organised by the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD), is part of the delivery of the 'Our Rural Future' – Rural Development Policy. Attendees heard about a range of plans that will transform rural transport, connectivity and accessibility for many more people and towns. The plans for rural support include 'Connecting Ireland', which will see a 25% increase in rural bus services and will ensure that 70% of people in rural Ireland will have access to a public transport system that provides at least three return trips to the closest larger town.

According to the DRCD, this means that 100 rural villages, will, for the first time, benefit from frequent and reliable public transport. The event also heard about the importance of community led transport and the potential to expand the Community Transport Scheme. Minister Ryan also spoke about the new 'Pathfinder Projects' that he has asked local authorities throughout the country to identify. These are innovative sustainable mobility projects and initiatives which can be delivered within the next two years and which can make an immediate difference to how people move around our rural towns and townlands, according to the DRCD.



Opening the event, Minister Ryan said: 'My department's Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan, in tandem with the Our Rural Future – Rural Development Policy, is strongly committed to improving public transport services in rural areas and to piloting transport initiatives for people of all ages and abilities living there. Our vision for rural Ireland is ambitious and one that is a key priority within the Programme for Government. As people start to return to work, school or college after the summer holidays, we are seeing

an increasing demand for public transport. But, it's not enough that this demand is concentrated in our large towns and cities; we have to ensure that people in smaller towns or in townlands around those towns can also benefit from high-quality frequent public transport. That's the vision and that's the aim and I am confident that we will, together, help reverse decades of neglect in this area and leave instead a legacy that will ensure that rural transport can continue to develop and expand.'

The event, which included transport providers, rural support and development groups and residents of rural communities, heard from National Transport Authority (NTA) director of public transport services, Tim Gaston; Deirdre de Bhailís of Dingle Creativity and Innovation Hub; Seamus Boland, chief executive of Irish Rural Link (IRL); and Fiona

O'Shea, TFI Local Link manager, Donegal-Sligo-Leitrim. They spoke on a range of topics relating to the Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan and the provision of transport services in rural Ireland."

<https://www.agriland.ie/farming-news/minister-aims-to-reduce-decades-of-neglect-of-rural-transport/>

Republic of Ireland – North Louth: Cooley gets a New Community Bus

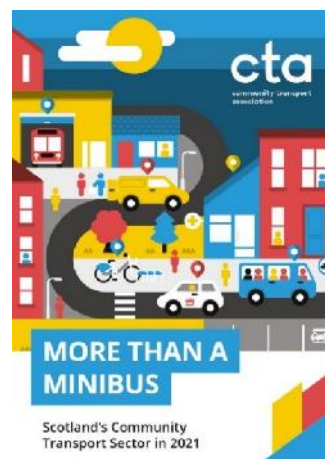
Dundalk Democrat: "On Tuesday the Cooley Complex group took ownership of a new community bus after a long three year wait. The application was made in 2018 and was granted in 2019 but due to Covid, use of the bus was put on hold until this week. The bus was purchased with funds made available through the CLAR rural investment scheme as Chair of Cooley Complex Harry McCarthy explained: 'Cooley is the only place in Louth that's in the CLAR area, it was put into the CLAR area in 2002 when the foot and mouth was here. So that means we're eligible for a lot of grants and we've gotten a lot of grants through it in Cooley.'



Harry says all maintenance and insurance on the bus will be paid for by TFI Local Link so any group wishing to use the bus will only have to pay for fuel. 'It's available to everybody, any clubs or groups that want to use it as transport for a day out or a tour, to mass or bingo, we want it used as much as possible. We're encouraging every group or club in the area to have a driver so they can book the bus.' The group are looking for volunteers in the local community to drive the bus and anyone who is interested can contact the Cooley Complex on 042 937 6602." <https://www.dundalkdemocrat.ie/news/home/911891/north-louth-cooley-gets-a-new-community-bus.html>

CTA Scotland – Cost of Living Crisis Threatens Community Transport Services

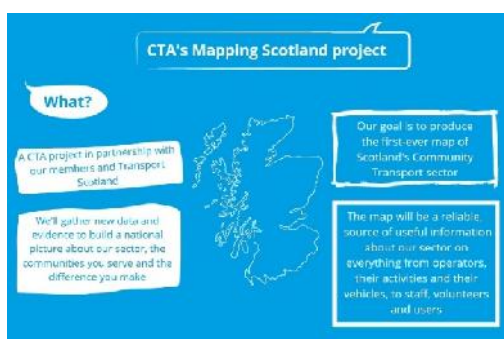
CTA (David Kelly): "Charities and community groups providing transport for Scotland's most vulnerable people and communities are under threat from the cost of living crisis, according to a new report published today. The Community Transport Association (CTA) says that over 170 groups across the country which deliver not-for-profit transport services are facing soaring fuel, labour and vehicle costs, as well as growing demand from an ageing population. Community Transport in Scotland delivered over 802,000 passengers, over 890,000 journeys and over 5.18 million miles in 2021. However, new research finds that many Community Transport operators are struggling to survive on shoestring budgets and run services on small, short-term grants. 1 in 3 Scottish operators rely on just one source of funding and few have benefited from an inflationary uplift to their grants for many years. Nearly 1 in 2 face rising demand.



Fares are rising and some schemes may be forced to close. CTA says this would have a devastating impact on many older and disabled people, as well as isolated and deprived communities, who rely on Community Transport to access education, employment, hospital appointments or the local high street. CTA's More Than a Minibus report

(<https://ctauk.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/More-Than-a-Minibus-CTA-2022.pdf>) calls on the Scottish Government, local authorities and other funders like the National Lottery to 'deliver fair, adequate and multi-year funding for Community Transport which keeps pace with inflation, contributes to core operating costs and sets flexible conditions'. Alongside the new report, CTA has also launched the first-ever map of Community Transport in Scotland (<https://ctauk.org/mapping-scotland-project/>). The interactive, online map will help passengers, funders and others to find local schemes and support in their area.

David Kelly, CTA's Director for Scotland, said: 'Our new report powerfully illustrates that Community Transport in Scotland is about so much more than a minibus – it's about bringing communities together; helping older and disabled people to access amenities and public services; and tackling big problems like climate change, loneliness and poverty. Our members across Scotland are also innovating with new and exciting models, from e-bikes to car clubs. Community Transport is leading the way to net zero, reducing car use and carbon emissions. 12% of the sector's fleet already hybrid or electric. But our research also reveals a £87.4 million funding gap, which needs to be closed to decarbonise the sector.'



He added: 'As Scotland struggles with a cost of living crisis and transitions to net zero, Community Transport is more important now than ever before. But many are worried about the future. That's why we need urgent action from national and local government to protect funding for the sector to ensure operators – as well as the people and communities who depend on them – can not only survive but thrive.'"

See: <https://ctauk.org/morethanaminibus/>

Also reported here:

<https://www.falkirkherald.co.uk/news/people/cost-of-living-crisis-poses-threat-to-falkirks-community-transport-services-3840469>

UK – Disability Rights Activists Demand EHRC Intervention into “Escalating Human Rights Crisis on Britain’s Railways”

Association of British Commuters: “In a letter dispatched today to the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), disability rights activists and human rights experts have called for its ‘urgent legal and policy interventions’ into the UK government’s secret plans for railway de-staffing. Their demand has been co-signed by Prof. Philip Alston, international human rights lawyer and former UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights and Ann Bates OBE, access expert and former UK government advisor on transport accessibility.

All signatories to the letter are known for their bold opposition to railway de-staffing, including: Andrew Hodgson, President of the National Federation of the Blind of the UK; Jan Shortt, General Secretary of the National Pensioners Convention; Paula Peters, on behalf of the Disabled People Against Cuts Steering Group; and Emily Yates, researcher and co-founder of the Association of British Commuters. They are joined by high-profile disability rights activists: Alan Benson MBE, Sarah Gayton, Anthony Jennings, Sam Jennings, Sarah Leadbetter and Doug Paulley.



Responding to widespread allegations of mass ticket office closures and the government’s reported £2 billion yearly cuts to railway spending, the activists say: ‘this could be our last

chance to prevent an escalating human rights crisis on Britain's railways'. They have demanded 'full transparency from the government about any new staffing models under consideration'; a robust staffing model to provide guaranteed 'turn up and go' assistance; and a public consultation on staffing and accessibility, insisting that 'the upcoming Transport Bill should not go ahead until this consultation has been completed.' The activists want the EHRC to ask for support from the United Nations (UN) and establish a joint approach to protect the 'fundamental right to spontaneous travel' of disabled people and other protected groups. <https://abcommuters.com/2022/08/17/disability-rights-activists-demand-ehrc-intervention-into-escalating-human-rights-crisis-on-britains-railways/>

UK - All aboard! How On-demand Public Transport is Getting Back on the Road

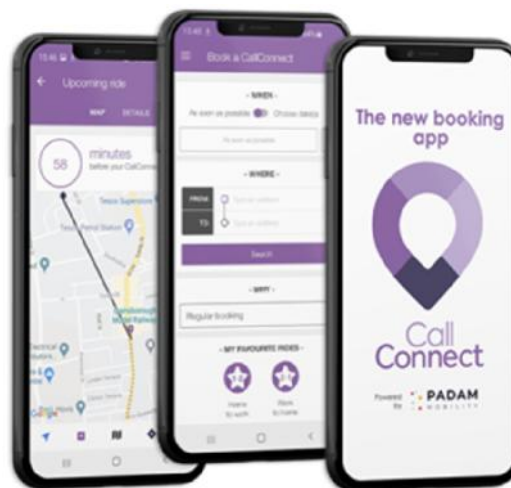
The Guardian: "During the early stages of the pandemic, Transport for Wales (TfW) decided to try something new. In May 2020 it launched Fflecsi, an app-based service that allows people to book a shuttle minibus from "floating bus stops" near their homes directly to their destination. Available in 11 locations across Wales, the service was an immediate hit: in five weeks passenger numbers grew 150% and in its first 12 months it served 50,000 trips. Best of all, 9% of its riders were people who hadn't previously used public transport. As one passenger said: 'This is too good to be true. This is Pembrokeshire, we don't get transport like this.'

Wales wasn't the only place experimenting with demand-responsive transport (DRT). Pilot DRT projects also sprang up in the suburbs of Munster in Germany, Osaka in Japan and Lone Tree in Colorado. Lukas Foljanty, a shared-mobility enthusiast and market expert, keeps track of the different DRT schemes around the world and thinks we may have reached a tipping point. There are already at least 450 schemes around the world, but last year 54 new projects emerged within a three-month period. The roots of DRT are in community transport, often door-to-door shuttles for older or less mobile citizens and we've known for some time that it could have huge environmental benefits. A 2005 study modelling the impact of a theoretical DRT network in the Helsinki metropolitan area concluded there could be a huge impact. It said: 'In an urban area with 1 million inhabitants, trip aggregation could reduce the health, environmental and other detrimental impacts of car traffic typically by 50 to 70% and if implemented could attract about half of the car passengers and within a broad operational range would require no public subsidies.'

But until now the schemes have not quite worked.

In the mid-2010s, several DRT operators in the US – the likes of Chariot and Loup – appeared and then promptly went out of business, either because they failed to get enough customers or did not meet health and safety requirements. Chariot's then CEO, Ali Vahabzadeh, told the Verge in 2017: 'Not to sound dramatic [but] no one in the history of the world has created a profitable mass transit service ... That's our mission.' That mission failed within two years. And the US wasn't alone. In 2019, with technology partners Via and MOIA, Transport for London (TfL) launched two trials of DRT, in Ealing and Sutton in outer London – both areas with high car usage – designed to complement existing transport. While it ran, the team said

'satisfaction was really high', with users scoring the service 4.8/5, praising ease of use, safety, cleanliness and accessibility. But low take-up, misunderstandings about who the service was for and safety concerns about unlit stops – combined with challenges brought by the pandemic – led to the 12-month trial being cut short.



But if it can be made to work, DRT is an obvious and excellent answer to a number of tricky questions. Public transport is urgently in need of an update and congestion and pollution mean traffic must be reduced. Now, local authorities are beginning to hope that technology – the ability for apps and mapping algorithms to improve efficiency and better aggregate trips on the hoof – has brought the idea into the 21st century. Companies such as Via, ioki, spare, Padam and RideCo could provide apps and mapping algorithms to run services; local authorities could provide the buses and drivers.

What about concerns that DRT would increase rather than decrease the number of vehicles on the road, since some users may choose the service instead of existing public transport? Lisa Dang, a research associate at Lucerne University, looked into the impact on traffic volumes and found that only where DRT supplemented existing public transport were there CO2 reductions, because users in those places switched from taxi or private car. In order to work, she believes, DRT will have to shift most of its rides from private motor vehicles, while achieving higher average capacity than the private car.

David Carnero, the head of international business at Padam, which operates DRT tech across Europe, Asia and North America, says successful DRT needs three key elements for success. 'DRT, whichever way you try to cut it – unless you're lying – requires subsidies,' he says. Second, it needs to be delivered 'at scale and I would suggest that the other important aspect is integrated transport policy' – in other words, ensuring it meshes with existing transport, rather than competing with it. Carnero adds: 'DRT is not the holy grail at all, but it is a component within an integrated transport policy or network offering that allows you to deliver against things like social exclusion.'

In Lincolnshire, the rural DRT service CallConnect is now in its second decade. Most users are elderly people and students and Stuart Eccles, Lincolnshire's senior transport officer, says that without it many people would struggle to travel, relying instead on lifts from neighbours or friends, or 'very expensive' taxis. Eccles says the recent introduction of an app has increased the number of last-minute bookings, which he sees as the technology offering users more freedom and control. While the telephone option will remain for older customers, he says the app data provides vital insight into users' needs and on potential improvements." <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2022/aug/11/all-aboard-how-on-demand-public-transport-is-getting-back-on-the-road>

UK – Revised Guidance on Categorisation of Defects

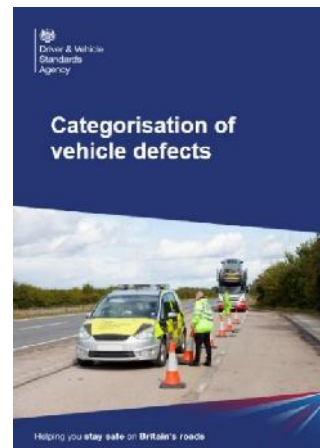
DVSA: "Our revised guidance on how we categorise vehicle defects in roadside checks has been published today. This guide outlines the actions we take when we find roadworthiness defects during vehicle inspections. We will enforce the new rules from 1 September 2022.

- J Load security - Individual defects have been added and updated in the load security section. This will make defects clearer for operators, drivers and examiners, to help identify and rectify issues. The changes include updates to suitable securing mechanisms for paper reels, skips and containers. For light vehicles, there are new load security defects for items being carried directly on the roof panel and insecure loads on a roof rack.
- J What else has changed? There is an updated defect for an inoperative PSV accessibility ramp or lift safety device.
- J We have also updated the motorcycle section on tyre tread depth, re-cut tread and brake fluid leaks.

There is a full change table in the last section of the manual. Read the revised categorisation of defects document here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/categorisation-of-defects>."

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKDVSA/bulletins/3289420>



UK – Petition to Increase the HMRC Mileage Rate from 45p/mile to 60p/mile: Government Response Published

The Petition: “The HMRC mileage rate for reimbursing the use of private cars (e.g. for employees but also volunteers) has been fixed at 45p/mile (up to 10,000 miles) since 2011. The lack of any increase since then is a serious disincentive to volunteer drivers particularly as fuel has gone up again recently. Since 2011, inflation has gone up by over 25%; fuel has increased by over 20% over the last 5 years. Volunteer car drivers who did so much during Covid and still do, to get people to healthcare settings, e.g. hospitals, vaccination centres and to deliver shopping and prescriptions, are not being compensated fairly for the use of their cars. Consequently charities are struggling to recruit new volunteer drivers. These drivers help free up hospital beds and keep people independent and in their own homes.” The petition gained 41,589 signatures.

HM Treasury Response: “The Approved Mileage Allowance Payment (AMAP) rate aims to reflect running costs including fuel, servicing and depreciation. Depreciation is estimated to constitute the most significant proportion of the rate, with fuel constituting around a third of total costs included in the rate. In most cases, only a proportion of non-fuel costs can be attributed to business usage and the AMAP rate takes this into account. The current advisory rate is 45p/mile for the first 10,000 miles and 25p thereafter and applies to employees and volunteer drivers who use a private car for business mileage. The rate applies across all fuel types. The AMAP rate is intended to create administrative simplicity by using an average. This means that the rate will be more appropriate for some drivers than for others. The AMAP rate is advisory and organisations are not required to reimburse at this level. It is ultimately up to the individual organisation to determine the rate of mileage reimbursement they offer employees or volunteers.

Organisations can agree to reimburse drivers the actual cost incurred, where individuals can provide evidence of the expenditure, without an Income Tax charge arising. There are extraordinary global circumstances contributing to the sustained period of high fuel prices, among them the Russian invasion of Ukraine. At Spring Statement 2022 in response to fuel prices reaching record levels, the government announced a temporary 12-month cut to duty on petrol and diesel of 5p per litre. This cut represents savings for households and businesses worth around £2.4 billion in 2022-23. As with all taxes and allowances, the Government keeps the AMAP rate under review.”

<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/600966>



Australia – ShareRide Wheels In

Midland Express: “Romsey and Lancefield residents have access to a new Community ShareRide initiative to aid their travel. An extension of Community Driven, ShareRide will provide a service to help connect residents to services and activities in the region. The joint Lancefield and Romsey Neighbourhood House venture launched at last week’s Lancefield Community Lunch with a three-year sponsorship from Bendigo Bank. LNH coordinator Vivien Philpotts said ShareRide would help prevent social isolation and mental health issues by enabling better connections. She said Neighbourhood House volunteers began exploring alternative community travel options when people indicated difficulties in reaching medical appointments. ‘There was a huge expense to people not being able to turn up to appointments,’ she said. ‘In Lancefield, we recognised that transport was an issue and we used funds from our community op shop to help people with access.’

RNH coordinator Michelle Balthazar relayed an emotional case that demonstrated the desperate need. 'A community member had been on a waiting list for a life-saving procedure for two years and she came to us in tears because she couldn't get there. She had no social networks to assist,' she said. A community survey revealed 96 per cent of respondents identified the need to travel outside the area for medical appointments. About 43 per cent said they had missed or delayed appointments due to travel constraints. The Neighbourhood Houses began developing a plan to address the needs of the community and it became obvious this extended beyond medical care. 'People have needs for alternate transport other than just medical – whether that's social or recreation – and it's just as important for people to have access to these activities for maintaining good mental and physical health,' Ms Balthazar said.

Bendigo Bank has committed a \$49,500 sponsorship across three years (\$16,500 pa). Senior manager Angela Dickens said the need for more transport options was a common conversation among clients. 'We were constantly hearing from the community that there was a need for transport so we are very excited to be a part of the launch,' she said. The trial timetable has pick-ups from Romsey and Lancefield on weekdays with destinations in Sunbury, Kyneton, Kilmore and Melbourne CBD. There are also options for travel between Lancefield and Romsey and around the two towns. Full details, service sign-up and the Community ShareRide timetable with pick-up points are available from the Lancefield and Romsey Neighbourhood Houses and online at:



www.communitydriven.org.au. Health transport assistance will continue alongside the new ShareRide initiative."

<https://midlandexpress.com.au/latest-news/featured/2022/08/02/community-shareride-for-romsey-and-lancefield/>

Australia - Could Queensland's KilkiVAN Mini-van Help Elderly across Australia Stay in the Bush?

ABC: "Ann Norris refuses to leave the home she loves in the bush. Many senior rural residents like her face the prospect of leaving their friends behind and moving to a larger town to an aged care facility. But the 80-year-old says she is choosing to grow old in the small town of Kilkivan, three hours north of Brisbane. 'I will not go to any of those places,' Ms Norris said. 'I don't care who says [what], I will die here.' However, with no public transport and no taxi or Uber service, doing simple tasks independently is almost impossible for the elderly who cannot drive. 'It's the grocery shopping and that sort of thing,' Ms Norris said. 'I've been independent up until now and haven't needed [help] ... but I do now.'

Ms Norris's help now regularly rolls in on four wheels and is affectionately known as the KilkiVAN. It's a one-size-fits-all service model that Queensland University of Technology researcher Udo Gottlieb believes could be successfully used in other regional communities across Australia. 'What we have shown here is a great example that we don't need to come up with an overarching solution that is a retirement village, with a GP office and all of that,' Dr Gottlieb said. 'Let's start small. Let's bring the basic services that rural communities need and build on that.' The KilkiVAN minibus service is run entirely by volunteers and takes Kilkivan's elderly residents anywhere from the local tavern to the nearest shopping centre 40km away in Gympie.

The Kilkivan and District Community Care Association president Rosie Fitzgerald has lived in Kilkivan all her life. Ms Fitzgerald said she was determined to find ways to help her

ageing community to stay put. 'I identified four key things that we needed to make this community a great place to age in place and the first was community transport ... because we have no community transport of any sort,' Ms Fitzgerald said. 'No taxi, no Uber, no community bus, nothing. So, people who had restricted licences or had lost their licences for health issues were stranded, effectively.' Ms Fitzgerald sought help from a group of Queensland University of Technology (QUT) business students, who devised a business model for the KilkiVAN.



Their senior lecturer, Dr Gottlieb, said it could be replicated elsewhere where services were lacking. 'Once you start on that community bus and show a viable business case that is viable over the years, then you will ... and that is the plan here ... find the financial backers to get the resources that is required into those towns,' he said. The KilkiVAN was purchased with a Queensland government grant. Running costs are barely met by the minimal fees charged to passengers. The longest trip to Gympie, about 40 minutes away,

costs \$20 return, but a trip to the local pub on Fridays is free to 'ensure maximum social inclusion' for those living alone. "We want to keep [fees] as low cost as possible so that no one is excluded from using it," Ms Fitzgerald said.

Like Dr Gottlieb, Ms Fitzgerald hopes the KilkiVAN model will catch on and bring attention to the lack of basic services available to the elderly outside the big smoke. 'We're here within an hour-and-a-half of Noosa's main beach, two-and-a-half hours of Brisbane's international airport and yet we find ourselves without core services that should be a human right in a society like ours,' she said. 'I would challenge all politicians, all councils everywhere, to have a look at their local communities and see how they can step up and support their seniors ... because I think it's a very overlooked cohort and it's a growing cohort.'

Dr Gottlieb said keeping ageing demographics in place for longer benefited small towns and the elderly alike. 'We are looking at the financial element in terms of having people staying in the community, spending money in the community, paying taxes in the community,' he said. 'On the other hand, it is also about the mental wellbeing of people living in the community'." <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-09-09/kilkivan-mini-bus-lets-rural-qlders-age-in-the-bush/101417396>

South Africa – 'Insensitivity' of Attack on Dial-a-Ride Service is Outrageous - Disability Activists

News24: "Disability activists and lobby groups have expressed outrage at an attack on a special needs transport vehicle during taxi violence in Cape Town. The Dial-a-Ride bus service was suspended in Nyanga after a vehicle was attacked on Wednesday. The vehicle was stoned while a passenger was inside. Dial-a-Ride is an essential service for commuters with special needs who cannot make use of conventional transport. 'The city can't risk the lives of the passengers and its staff while this violence continues and will only resume operations once it is safe to do so,' said Rob Quintas, mayco member for urban mobility.

The Western Cape Network on Disability (WCND) condemned 'the insensitivity of the actions' of protesters, saying they had endangered the lives of vulnerable people. It supported the City's move to suspend the service, despite 'the disruption it will cause to thousands depending on the service to go about their daily lives.' 'The impact of this service disruption

will be huge for those dependent on the service as accessible transport for people with disabilities is already a huge challenge and Dial-A-Ride for many is their only option to get to work, school or college," said WCND provincial co-ordinator, Natalie Johnson.

Around 320 commuters regularly use the Dial-A-Ride service, with another 2,300 eligible users who are transported on an ad-hoc basis. Dial-A-Ride is the only accessible door-to-door service for people with disabilities in the Western Cape, said Johnson. She said: 'Mobility challenges faced by commuters with special needs in Cape Town start from the moment they need to leave their home. Buses and trains are not accessible for those with physical disabilities, as well as those with other impairments.'



Erica du Toit, awareness and sensitisation coordinator for the Western Cape Association for Persons with Disabilities, said disabled commuters faced challenges in accessing public transport. 'Taxi owners and drivers don't always understand the finer details of mobility for people with disabilities. They can't always get into taxis and if they need to be helped inside they are likely to be charged more than other passengers,' she said. 'This is why door-to-door initiatives like Dial-a-Ride are of such value. If you take those services away, you're essentially confining people with disabilities to their homes.' She added that the two biggest challenges facing the community were access to jobs and transport – and very often access to employment was hampered by a lack of access to transport. 'Whoever attacked that Dial-a-Ride vehicle has disabled the people who were inside it by preventing them from going where they need to go. Society needs to understand that it is the society that is the disabling factor, not disabilities.'..."

<https://www.news24.com/news24/southafrica/news/insensitivity-of-attack-on-dial-a-ride-service-is-outrageous-disability-activists-20220905>

Devon – Community Transport to the Rescue...

Exmouth Journal: "The time comes when we must give up driving because of ill health. Also, given today's economic climate it might be we just cannot afford to drive anymore. We live in a rural community where train lines are non-existent and buses are few and far between. Buses are also expensive if you are one of the few who must pay. You will also be lucky to find a taxi that is willing to venture out of the main towns and if they do it will be at a cost. Fortunately, East Devon is blessed with people who are more than aware of the issues and who step in, usually voluntarily, to help.

Community transport schemes all operate slightly differently but at their heart is the desire to help those who cannot afford to use public or their own transport or who have mobility issues which prevents them from doing so. TRIP, who are based in Honiton, also provide cars and buses as well as many other services in their part of East Devon. Seachange has been running a transport service since 2018. Initially, it was set up to bring people to our base in Budleigh for medical appointments, physical activities and events. It soon became clear demand for the service was high. We expanded to provide help with transport not only to Seachange but to medical appointments at other locations across East Devon and Exeter. Then Covid-19 hit.

During Covid-19, we transformed the service into a shopping, prescription collection and food delivery service. Over that period our drivers collected 1200 prescriptions, shopped 600 times and completed over 1600 hours of public service. Since those horrible times we have continued to expand. Last year we took 800 people to their Covid-19 vaccinations. We now also take people to wellbeing appointments such as the hairdressers or to see friends. All our 35 drivers are volunteers who give their time and sometimes vehicles for free. Some claim mileage allowance and then donate it back to us. Amazing.

Our transport service is run by Esther (pictured) who does an excellent job juggling requests with driver's availability. Esther is now located in her very own office within Seachange such is the demand for her service. Maybe you would like to help your community by giving a few minutes or hours a week to drive someone to their medical appointment? I guarantee you will enjoy the connections and friendships you will make. Contact us at Seachange

(help@seachangedevon.org 446896) or connect one of our fellow community transport organisations."

<https://www.exmouthjournal.co.uk/news/community-transport-at-seachange-budleigh-9221700>



Leicestershire - Volunteers in Lutterworth Praised for their 'Dedication and Selflessness'



Harborough Mail: "Volunteers at the Lutterworth Community Transport have been praised for their amazing work. The charity provides transport services to the residents of Lutterworth, Broughton Astley and the surrounding villages using cars and minibuses driven by volunteers. Deputy Lord-Lieutenant Colonel Richard Hurwood visited the volunteers at a special lunch on Tuesday to present them with a Platinum Jubilee Business and Community Award on behalf of the Lord Lieutenant.

Mr Hurwood praised the dedication and selflessness of the volunteers and their partners and thanked them on behalf of the community for their efforts, particularly during the pandemic where they kept the

service running to transport people to vaccination hubs and to urgent medical appointments. Manager Graeme Thomson said: 'It is fantastic that the hard work of our volunteers and their partners has been recognised with this award.' To find out more the Lutterworth Community Transport visit about <https://www.luttct.com/>.
<https://www.harboroughmail.co.uk/news/people/volunteers-in-lutterworth-praised-for-their-dedication-and-selflessness-3821207>

Cambridgeshire - Anonymous Donor Pledges Cash to Keep Wisbech Tesco Bus on the Road

Fenland Citizen: "An anonymous benefactor has stumped up thousands of pounds to help keep a vital community bus running while politicians decide whether or not to fund the service. Gary Christy, trustee and chair of Fenland Association for Community Transport, which operates Route 68 affectionately known as the Tesco bus in Wisbech on a not-for-profit basis, says he's blown away by the generosity of the unnamed person. He said: 'The person came forward and offered to fund the bus until October 21 after watching what happened at the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Board meeting on Wednesday, when protestors confronted the mayor over the need for funding. Having witnessed what went on and the fact that no commitment was forthcoming to keep the bus, which is a lifeline to its many users, running the person decided to offer to pay what's needed. It means that hopefully, if the Combined Authority agrees at its transport and infrastructure committee meeting on September 21 to provide the funding for the bus, there will be no break in service. Without this generous offer Bus 68 would have ceased to run on September 30 and it would take up to 42 days to get the paper work back in place for it to operate if the Combined Authority then did commit to funding the service.'



Bus user Michelle Rham was among those to confront Cambridgeshire Mayor Dr Nik Johnson over the Tesco Bus. The bus has been under threat since temporary funding provided by the Combined Authority, first by former mayor James Palmer and then by current Cambridgeshire Mayor Dr Nik Johnson, was due to run out at the end of this month. Placard waving users took their case personally to Mayor Dr Johnson on Wednesday in a bid to persuade him to stump up the necessary cash. However, he refused to budge from his position, which is that Bus 68 will be discussed along with every other bus service in Cambridgeshire on September 21, when decisions would be made."

<https://www.fenlandcitizen.co.uk/news/anonymous-donor-pledges-cash-to-keep-wisbech-tesco-bus-on-th-9272054/>
Earlier story is here: <https://www.fenlandcitizen.co.uk/news/save-bus-68-wisbech-protestors-tackle-cambridgeshire-mayor-9271646/>

Kent – Volunteer Drivers Sought for New Disabled Friendly Community Bus Service in Swanscombe and Greenhithe

Kent Online: "The wheels have been put in motion for a new community minibus to help both young and old. Transport in and around Greenhithe and Swanscombe has been bolstered by a new service led by different groups and volunteers from the public. Around three years ago the community came up with the idea of starting a shared transport scheme, initially with one minibus to be shared between different organisations. An application was made and grant funding was approved from both Kent County Council and the Kent Community Foundation.



But then Covid struck and the decision was taken not to acquire vehicles likely to remain unused during lockdown. Since then the scheme has resurfaced and three partner organisations have got involved who, with the help of regular volunteers from the public, run the service. These are 'Walk Tall', a local charity supporting youngsters, 'The Seniors Lunch Club' and two local churches, St Marys at Greenhithe and St Peters St Pauls at Swanscombe.

Swanscombe & Greenhithe Residents' Association councillor Peter Harman said: 'All costs are shared equally between the groups and they are and we are planning to take on further community partner organisations when circumstances allow. Our minibus is disabled friendly and has a variable seating arrangement; ranging from seventeen passenger seats to three passenger seats and six wheelchair spaces. We have had eight members of the public kindly volunteering to be drivers of the vehicle, but are certainly looking for more volunteers to spread the load.' The next goal is to buy a van to help with the 'Mary's Child' charity, organised by local vicar Charlie to collect and deliver furniture for previously homeless people within the community. Anybody wishing to join the group of volunteers should phone Peter Harman on 07956 347419 for more details."

<https://www.kentonline.co.uk/dartford/news/drivers-sought-for-community-minibus-scheme-272730/>

Wiltshire - Trowbridge Guild of Community Service Forced to Axe minibus service

Wiltshire Times: "Elderly and vulnerable people in Trowbridge have been dealt a blow by the collapse of a vital community bus service on which they depended. Trowbridge Guild of Community Service has axed its main operation – a community minibus service that ferries pensioners and vulnerable people to and from local community and lunch clubs. The Guild used two new 14-seater Mercedes minibuses equipped with a wheelchair space and wheelchair ramps They were mainly used to take customers to and from activities, day trips, shopping trips and for private hire bookings by customers. Guild chairman Stephen Brackenbury said the service had been stopped at the end of July because they could no longer afford to run it at a financial loss.

The service has been badly hit by a massive downturn in income during the Covid pandemic and by rising costs of fuel, servicing and maintenance for the vehicles. 'We have been forced to let go three of our drivers and are planning to sell our two Mercedes minibuses,' he said. 'Our income pre-Covid was £30,000, now it's less than £15,000 and we could no longer afford to carry on providing the service.' Mr Brackenbury said the Guild is trying to sell the minibuses for around £50,000."

<https://www.wiltshiretimes.co.uk/news/20743374.trowbridge-guild-community-service-forced-axe-minibus-service/>



Lincolnshire - Tributes Pour in for Spalding's Angela Newton

Spalding Today: "A stream of tributes have poured in for Spalding councillor Angela Newton, who died aged 76 on Tuesday. Spalding-born Angela had touched the lives of countless people across the area in a long career of public service - having been first elected as a councillor in 1973. Fellow members of the Independent group on South Holland District Council and representatives of businesses and organisations have spoken out to pay tribute to



Angela, who represented the Spalding Monkshouse ward. Angela had been a member of South Holland District Council since it was formed, was its first female chairman and leader of the Independent Group. She also served on Lincolnshire County Council and a number of charities and organisations including Spalding in Bloom and South Holland Parish Voluntary Car Scheme. The committed councillor had battled bravely against illness and did not let it get in the way of her work...People who worked alongside Angela Newton on various

organisations have expressed how much she will be missed...Angela had been a key member of the South Holland Parish Voluntary Car Scheme since 1989 – and had still been driving patients to appointments recently. Manager for Spalding Andy Bunce said: 'She was the first councillor I had met who was true to her calling. She has helped thousands of people.' Coun Newton had also fought for town bus services - holding talks to save routes and to try to expand public transport for residents. A spokesman for Brylaine Travel said: 'Absolutely gutted, our thoughts are with her family and friends. A most wonderful, kind hearted, warm, funny lady - who was dedicated to Spalding residents and communities.'..."

<https://www.spaldingtoday.co.uk/news/tributes-pour-in-for-angela-newton-9271800/>

Lincolnshire - Fundraiser for Wolds Community Transport Project

GoFundMe: "Join us in raising money for our Chair's chosen charity, Wolds Community Transport Project, through our charity fundraisers. Wolds Community Transport Project work with affiliated community groups across the Lincolnshire Wolds area to make affordable transport available to the elderly and vulnerable with their 17-seater minibus. The charity's objective is 'promoting any charitable purpose in the provision of a community transport service and in particular the relief of elderly persons who would otherwise be socially isolated.' The pandemic hit the charity heavily, as no grants were available and fewer fundraisers took place, which is why we are extending our commitment to raise money for this great cause. Thank you in advance for your contribution."

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/fundraiser-for-wolds-community-transport-project>



Yorkshire – Charity's Popular Dales Day Out Up and Running Again



Ilkley Gazette: "Ilkley Good Neighbours has resumed its popular scenic Yorkshire Dales excursions followed by an afternoon tea for local residents. The lifting of Covid restrictions has meant that the charity is once again able to use the services of Ilkley and District Community Transport to take clients on trips around the countryside helping them meet up and socialise with others. 'We've had two trips so far when our guests enjoyed the beautiful Yorkshire countryside along with an afternoon tea at the Cavendish Pavilion on the Bolton Abbey estate,' said organiser and charity trustee Anita Dunford. 'Many of the people

who went on the trips live alone and some had been shielding during the lockdown and missed the social events that Ilkley Good Neighbours. We are so pleased that once again we can help bring people in our area together in a pleasant setting that can help reduce feelings of isolation. The clients on the trips had a good day out and I would like to thank the staff at the Cavendish Pavilion for providing a lovely afternoon tea experience which was much appreciated by everyone.' One of the people on a trip was Jean Hawley, who said: 'What a wonderful afternoon along with an incredible tea to round it off. I really appreciate all that was done for us. It was lovely to see the countryside and the calves in the fields. Many thanks to Ilkley Good Neighbours for arranging it.'

The final Dales Day out will take place on September 19th and there are still places available to the charity's clients. Forthcoming popular social events include the annual Christmas lunch in December and a visit to the Pantomime in January. Ilkley and District Good Neighbours operates a range of social and practical schemes aimed at improving the lives of older and more vulnerable people in the area, playing an important role through projects such as Shop Assist, one to one Befriending and its regular weekly Moving On Friendship Group at the

Clarke Foley Centre. 'We're very lucky to have a great team of volunteers working with us,' added Anita. 'And if anyone would like further information please visit our website at www.goodneighboursilkley.org.uk or give us a call on 01943 603348.'

<https://www.ilkleygazette.co.uk/news/20615475.charitys-popular-dales-day-running/>

Hampshire - Alton Community Bus to Resume Saturday Service

Farnham Herald: "Alton's Community Bus is due to start again every Saturday for those in Eastbrooke and Wooteys who do not have a weekend or bank holiday bus service. Thanks to a grant of £10,000 from the East Hampshire District Council welfare fund, Alton Community Bus was able to buy a second-hand bus in conjunction with Alton Community Centre. Paula Langley, founder of Alton Community Bus and an Alton Eastbrooke district councillor, said: 'We have been unable to run the Saturday service for some time, because of Covid and then the state of the old bus at the community centre. With a new route planned to take in even more of the Eastbrooke and Wooteys areas, the team are looking for passengers to let them know where they want to go. They cannot compete with commercial routes and so it can only be where there is no bus service in that area on a Saturday.'



Cllr Langley continued: 'This bus is for everyone. We want it to be a service that not only supports those unable to get into town, but people who realise leaving their cars at home is good for the environment, as well as their wallets. It will have a strict timetable, just like a normal bus and can be booked in advance if there are specific events in town people want to go to.' The Alton Community Bus started several years ago with a shuttle service for the Yuletide Festival and it is hoped residents will use and support this service again. With only a £1.50 suggested donation, it is cheaper than parking or using taxis.

'With a personal service that means you can ask to be dropped off or picked up anywhere safe along the route, it is a great addition to support our local businesses in town,' added Cllr Langley. With sponsorship and grants from East Hampshire District Council leader Cllr Richard Millard, Bookers & Bolton Solicitors and other local businesses in the past, it is hoped this can provide a much-needed lifeline for those who are isolated from the town and the events hosted there. The new Saturday shuttle route will be decided this week and maps and timetables can be found on the Alton Community Bus Facebook page at www.facebook.com/AltonCommunityBus, Bookers & Bolton Solicitors website www.bookersandbolton.co.uk, the Action for Eastbrooke and Wooteys pages and will be published in as many other newsletters as possible. If you would like to know more about the bus, be added to the regulars' list, become a paid driver, offer sponsorship or book it for town events, call Paula Langley on 01420 558333 or send an email to paula.langley@easthants.gov.uk."

<https://www.farnhamherald.com/news/alton-community-bus-to-resume-saturday-service-562637>

Yorkshire - Leading Local Charity Figure John Jewitt Passes Away

Ilkley Gazette: "A major figure in the charity world has sadly passed away. For over two decades, John Jewitt was involved in working with Ilkley and District Good Neighbours in various roles, developing a number of key community services which continue to help people in the area today. John, who has died aged 75, was the longest serving trustee of the charity Good Neighbours and worked tirelessly to help those in need over the years. A cornerstone of the charity, many tributes have been paid to his efforts by friends, colleagues and dignitaries. Current Chair of the charity Ed Duguid said: 'John, or JJ as we called him, was a long serving and much loved member of our trustees. He had been a trustee for 22 years and a key member of our team. The many volunteers he worked with and our trustees will miss his wise counsel and dry sense of humour. Our thoughts and condolences are with his family.'

Charity trustee Pamela Brunger said: 'I have known John for over 20 years, when both of us were recruited to ICVS/Good Neighbours. There have been many changes, developments and challenges over the years which John took in his stride. He was always there to support his colleagues and his dry sense of humour could brighten up many a discussion and put things into perspective. In spite of John's health issues he was always stoic and got on with dealing with whatever life threw at him. He was a supportive, kindly friend and always had time to listen. I will miss him.'



One of the charity's former Chairs Judy Hutton added: 'I had the privilege of working alongside John for the last 18 years. He had a very unique sense of humour which brought a lightness to our meetings. John made a tangible difference to the charities he represented and the older people of Ilkley. I am proud to have been his friend.' Someone who also worked closely with John over the years was Mary Hamilton, Manager of the Ilkley office of Community Action Bradford and District who said: 'John personified all that is great about volunteering in our community. He brought his energy, knowledge and skills – not to mention his special sense of humour – to many volunteering roles with ICVS, Ilkley Good Neighbours and Ilkley Community Transport.'

<https://www.ilkeygazette.co.uk/news/20831048.leading-local-charity-figure-john-jewitt-passes-away/>

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